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From the Unpolished to the Refined: The Evolution of the Furniture Trades at Hampton Institute, 1868-1960s.

Vanessa Darlene Thaxton-Ward
College of William and Mary

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**From the Unpolished to the Refined: The Evolution of the Furniture Trades at
Hampton Institute, 1868-1960s**

Vanessa Darlene Thaxton-Ward

Hampton, Virginia

**Master of Arts, Hampton University, 1987
Bachelor of Arts, Virginia Wesleyan College, 1983**

**A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

American Studies Program

**The College of William and Mary
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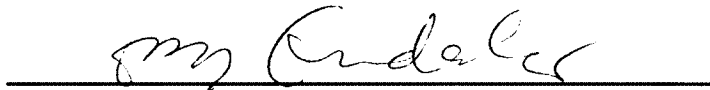
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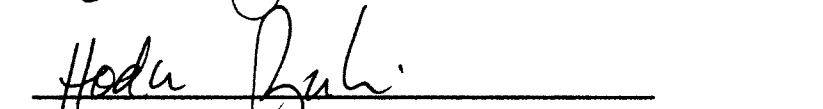

Vanessa Darlene Thaxton-Ward

Approved by the Committee, May, 2013


Committee Chair
Professor Grey Gundaker, American Studies and Anthropology
The College of William and Mary


Professor Michael Blakey, Anthropology and American Studies
The College of William and Mary


Associate Professor Charles McGovern, American Studies and History
The College of William and Mary


Professor Hoda Zak, Political Science and African American Studies
Hood College

ABSTRACT

This dissertation looks at the history of Hampton Normal Industrial and Agricultural Institute through its curriculum in the Trade School, concentrating on the Furniture Trades. My study is predominantly concerned with showing how the achievements of Hampton students and graduates in furniture making served as a metaphor for understanding the advancement of African Americans during this period from two perspectives: the history of African American material life in which highly skilled artisanal production promoted social and economic advancement; and the role of Trades curricula in debates about the proper course of African American higher education over time. The dissertation also provides information on the furniture produced at Hampton, the recollections of former students and faculty in the program, and the efforts of the Hampton University Museum to collect and preserve these important parts of Hampton's history.

I use evidence from history, African American and material culture studies, and public and oral history to present a multifaceted discussion about how from 1868 through the 1960s furniture made in the school provided unpolished functional pieces for the school's use and refined ones for sale to the surrounding communities. Through these endeavors, Hampton served as one of the many catalysts for the uplift of African Americans.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iv
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Introduction Why Cabinet-making Methodology and overview of chapters	1
Chapter 1. African Americans' Search for Education as Enslaved and Freed People	23
Chapter 2. The Curriculum of Hampton Normal, Industrial and Agricultural Institute	43
Chapter 3. Material Representation, Furniture Trades: Cabinetmaking and Upholstery	100
Chapter 4. Building on Tradition: Collecting, Documentation and Exhibitions and Style	165
Conclusion	197
Appendix A. Cabinetmakers at Hampton: Personal Narratives	201
Appendix B. Select Furniture Catalog from the Hampton University Museum	210
Appendix C. Leonard J. Young, Sr. Original Drawings	226
Appendix D. Interviews	234
Appendix E. Trade School Curriculum	264

Appendix F. Select Furniture Glossary	271
References and Bibliography	273
Vitae	293

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This Ph.D. is dedicated to my family
Richard, Heru and Mettima Ward
and my parents
Willie W. Green, Jr. (September 18, 1931 – March 13, 2013) and Louise R.
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LIST OF TABLES

1.	1902-3 Trade School Report on Student Enrollment	70
2.	List of Furniture Trade Instructors	130
3.	Tools and Supplies	152
4.	Jacobean-William and Mary, 1640-1720	185
5.	Queen Anne, 1720-1755	186
6.	Chippendale, 1775 – 1790	186
7.	Classical Period, 1790-1830	187
8.	Early Victorian, 1830-1870	188

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Trade School Monument	2
2. Thomas Day Secretary	14
3. Early photograph of HNAI, 1868	49
4. A Plan of HNAI, Hampton, VA	57
5. Hollis B. Frissell, Second Principal	67
6. Reuben V. Burrell, 19 years old	85
7. President Alonzo G. Moron	95
8. Mrs. Emma Walker Armstrong's Desk	105
9. Early photograph of HNAI dormitory	106
10. Indian students mattress making at HNAI	108
11. Interior of Chapel	111
12. Indian Table, c. 1895	112
13. Detail of Indian Table, note beading	114
14. Detail of Indian Table, Exterior Drawer	114
15. Detail of Indian Table, legs with pineapples	114
16. Men in Carpentry Shop, Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1900	120
17. Students at work on house, Frances Benjamin Johnston, c. 1900	121
18. Men Using Machinery in Woodworking Shop, Frances Benjamin Johnston, c. 1900	121
19. Class in Egyptian History, Frances Benjamin Johnston, c. 1900	122
20. Class in Sloyd, Frances Benjamin Johnston, c. 1900	122
21. Graduates Dining at Home, Frances Benjamin Johnston, c. 1900	123
22. Furniture Trades Workshop, Reuben V. Burrell, c. 1940s	129
23. Replica of George Washington Sheraton Desk, c. 1940s	132
24. James Adams in his home	132
25. T. A. Fountain property, c. 1940s	134
26. Mayme Bowman in Upholstery Workroom, c. 1940	134

27. Leonard "Joe" Young with Divan pattern, c. 1940s	135
28. Colonial Revival Queen Anne Style Settee, c. 1940s	136
29. Training in Upholstering, Courtesy of Joyce Hudgens Blair, c. 1940s-50s	139
30. Summer Session, Mayme Bowman and Cabinetmaking and Upholstering Majors, c. 1940s-50s	139
31. Furniture Trades Students at Tea	140
32. Mahogany Chest of Drawers Blueprint, Leonard "Joe" Young	141
33. Mahogany Tea Table Blueprint Leonard "Joe" Young	142
34. Furniture Shop, c. 1940s	142
35. Billy Smith carving a Chippendale Ribbon back Chair, c. 1940s	143
36. Original Chippendale Ribbon back Chair, 1754	144
37. Chippendale Shelf made by John Hudgens, c. 1940s-50s	147
38. Training in the Finishing Room, c. 1940s-50s,	147
39. Mansion House Desk made by John Hudgens as a Project, c. 1940s-50s	148
40. Map of the Saw Mill, Furniture Trades Building and Wood Piles, c. 1940	150
41. Interior of George Washington Desk drawer	151
42. Chest of Drawers from bedroom Suite made at Hampton	160
43. Detail of Chest of Drawers, tongue & Groove detail	161
44. Side table	161
45. Headboard and footboard	161
46. Gateleg Dining Room Table	163
47. Dining room chair	163
48. Victorian Headboard	169
49. Detail of Crest from Victorian bed	170
50. Victorian Footboard	170
51. Back of Indian Table Drawer	171
52. Back of Emma Armstrong's desk	171
53. Corner Cabinet made in Furniture Shop, c. 1940s	174
54. Hampton University Museum , Greg Adams, 2007	176
55. Hampton University Museum , Greg Adams, 2007	177
56. Colonial Acorn Bed Blueprint, Leonard "Joe" Young	179
57. Colonial Revival Lowpost Bed, photographer, Reuben V. Burrell	179
58. Lowery Tilt Top Table and woodworking tools	180
59. Mahogany Sewing Table, made by Reuben V. Burrell, c. 1960	181
60. Photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Joseph Young, Richard Ward, 2010	204
61. Leonard "Joe" Young Hampton Diploma – Cabinetmaking	204
62. Leonard "Joe" Young, Hampton diploma,	

1941, Trade School	205
63. Leonard "Joe" Young, Commencement Program for Bachelor of Science, 1947	205
64. Curio Cabinet made by Bernard Randolph for the Randolphs, c. 2011	209

Introduction

This school is too vast, too multiform, too cosmian, to be grasped in a single hour. I have seen London, I have seen Edinburgh I have seen Venice, I have seen the Coliseum, I have seen the British Museum, but I should not have seen the world if I had not seen Hampton Institute. I have seen more to day of what touches my feelings, more of prophecy of what is to be, more of contrast with what has been, than I have ever seen before. ...I feel profound pleasure, my young friends in looking upon this glorious view, looking up to this beaming sky, and thinking of the benevolent kindness; the disinterested, lofty, religious sentiment, out of which these buildings have sprung; out of which Huntington Hall has sprung, and all these work shops for your training in useful arts- the joiner shop, the shops for the workers of wood, the workers of leather, the printing office - I can't talk, I can only say I am glad-glad-glad deep in my heart, with what I see.¹

Frederick Douglass [January 1884]

General Armstrong used to tell us that the destiny of our race was in our own hands. Hampton's aim was to inspire us with high purpose, useful skills, and sufficient knowledge so that every graduate might carry the idea of self-help to his community.²

Thomas Calhoun Walker [1883]

On a bright sunny morning, over seventy-five men gathered at the historic Armstrong-Slater Memorial Trade School on the campus of Hampton University located in Hampton, Virginia. Although the Trades School taught both men and women, this assembly consisted of men who had graduated in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. The men had a

¹ Frederick Douglass, "Speech by Frederick Douglass at Hampton Institute," *The Southern Workman*, vol. xiii., no. 2, February 1884, p. 14.

² Thomas Calhoun Walker, *The Honey Pod Tree: The Life of Thomas Calhoun Walker*. (New York: The John Day Company), 1958, p. 37

look of pride that was indescribable. Some had to use canes and others had to sit in folding chairs as they participated in this long awaited occasion. On May 13, 2006, during Reunion Activities for the commencement exercises, President William R. Harvey dedicated the Trade School Monument to the men and women who graduated from the historic trade school. Harvey exclaimed, “this monument is made of granite to symbolize strength, perseverance and endurance ... it is shaped in the form of an obelisk to remind all Hamptonians no matter the circumstances we should stand tall for Hampton.”³



Figure 1, Trade School Monument in front of Armstrong-Slater building. Reuben V. Burrell photographer, 2006

³William R. Harvey, *Dedication of the Trade School Monument Program*, Saturday, May 13, 2006, 11:30 a.m., Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia.

Captivated by the beauty of the monument as well as the reality that it was finally completed, the returning graduates basked in joy as they greeted each other, reminisced and read the different sides of the monument. All of the different trades are listed on this beautiful edifice. Beautifully landscaped with bushes and flowers, the area also features bricks that were purchased with the names of tradesmen and the year that they graduated. Excitedly, I greeted individuals that I had met in 1996, during a previous event and tried to find as many graduates who had completed the furniture trades as possible.

I met Leonard Joseph Young in 1996. This was during the time when I organized the celebration marking the 100th Anniversary of the building of the Armstrong – Slater Trade School. This event was sponsored by the Hampton University Museum. Mr. Young and other graduates were invited to spend a three-day weekend where they would present papers about their days in the trade school. During this weekend, we also collected oral histories with the help of museum studies graduate students. This event was a huge success and was one of many events that helped to begin a dialogue between the university and a number of the trade men. With a long and sometimes contentious history, several graduates from the trade school program have had the perception that they were looked upon negatively by the Hampton administration. Many Hampton graduates, including Mr. Young, were upset when the trade school was phased out in the 1950s and thought that Hampton did not want to be associated with trade education. Up to the commemoration of the trade school's anniversary, it was not uncommon to hear comments that Hampton "not only closed the trade school, they also systematically suppressed any mention or reference to the trades." Mr. Young was one of the major

advocates for the trade school memorial and it just so happens that his trade at Hampton was cabinet-making

Why Cabinet-making

As slaves became abundant, planters found it easy to maintain a complete, self-supporting plantation. A missionary, visiting the Colony in 1711, found a great number of slaves who understood handicraft, the men working as “carpenters, joiners, wheelwrights, coopers butchers, tanners, shoemakers, tallow-candlers, watermen,” while the women were “soapmakers, starch-makers, and dyers.”⁴

Cabinet-making may not have been a new skill to many of the first African American students who came to Hampton in 1868 for an education but for others it was a totally new experience. As noted in the publication, *The Negro in Virginia*, many planters in Virginia utilized not only the brawn of their imported African laborers, but also became dependent on their skills – some that were inherited and some that were taught to them after they were enslaved. Research has shown that “slave carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, dyers, tanners and shoemakers were common on Virginia plantations in the second half of the seventeenth century.”⁵ So why would Hampton Normal Industrial and Agricultural Institute (HNIA) add the trades to the curriculum?

I answer this question by focusing on the cabinet-making department and by drawing on the deeper history and social life of African Americans, a process that has been marked by social uplift. Scholars through the years have shown that the nature of the arrival of African Americans in America and their long history of struggle and resilience is a remarkable story of achievement. While many of these scholars have

⁴⁴ J. F. Blair, editor, *The Negro in Virginia* (New York: Arno Press, 1967) 48.

⁵ Blair, *The Negro in Virginia*. 47

expounded on the different experiences of this group, there is still the need to look at specific cases to fully understand African Americans' journeys and achievements. For in spite of chattel slavery and the oppression of white supremacy, African Americans have always sought out education to enhance their chances of survival by tapping into their creative and material competency. One area that exemplifies this ability to move beyond the restraints associated with servitude is cabinet-making.

African American cabinet-making has a long history involving different trajectories and role modeling found in formal and informal learning spheres. During slavery, planters and other slaveholders relied on the handicrafts of their enslaved people because it helped to support the wealth and prosperity of the system:

Slaveowners encouraged Negroes to become craftsmen for two reasons: for the construction work that they would do on their plantations and for the wages their hire would bring. .. To the slave, apprenticeship was a step toward freedom, since many owners allowed slave artisans to retain a portion of their hire.⁶

For the African American cabinetmaker, working outside of the plantation and utilizing this specific skill allowed for some level of autonomy and, if permission was granted, to retain some of the monetary gains. Overall, this skill and its prospects served as resources for navigating the hardships many enslaved people experienced in their avenues to freedom. Not only were these tradesmen able to move beyond the confines of the plantation, many of them were also able to save enough money to purchase their freedom. Slaves' achievements as artisans were restricted by the changing economics of

⁶ Blair, *The Negro in Virginia*. 48. For more on the relationship between slave owners and their enslaved craftsmen, see "Black and White all Mix'd Together" The Hidden Legacy of Enslaved Craftsmen" by Daniel Kurt Ackerman, associate curator at MESDA. This article can be found in *Antique Fine Art Magazine*, Winter/Spring 2009.

agriculture and the will of their masters. Overall, the people who survived slavery had a life of drudgery and were in need of help even if they were skilled artisans.

Noted historian and expert scholar on slavery, John W. Blassingame writes that, “usually the slaves had to make what furniture and utensils they used. They built tables, beds, and benches and sometimes carved wooden spoons.”⁷ Another important scholar John Michael Vlach, who has worked extensively with American material culture, has studied various forms of the decorative arts of African Americans and has linked the traditions to Africa as well as the everyday experiences of this group. He has recognized many stylistic elements and practices that have served as good examples of the African heritage and these included traditions in boat-making, burial practices, and the making of canes and pottery.⁸

Sharon Patton, art historian and museum curator wrote an article in *The International Review of African American Art* about nineteenth-century African American artisans in which she states “that the history of furniture making in the South (concentrated in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and Louisiana) still needs much research and documentation.” Patton’s article focuses on one of the most noted African American cabinetmakers, Thomas Day, a free man who was very active and successful in Milton, North Carolina between 1823 and 1860. Day was so well established that he had several apprentices and sold his work to the governor of North

⁷ John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 159..

⁸ John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1990), 1.

Carolina as well as to various wealthy whites in the region. Unfortunately, Day died bankrupt.

Patton's article also focuses on another well-known nineteenth century cabinetmaker, DutreuilBarjon who was active from 1822–1845 in New Orleans.⁹ Margo Moscou, author and historian, published a very thorough review in her 2008 publication, *New Orleans' Free Men of Color: Cabinet Makers in the New Orleans Furniture Trade, 1800 – 1850*. This book complements Patton's work and features DutreuilBarjon and other African American freed men who were active in cabinet-making in New Orleans.

Moscou's work draws attention to another very important aspect of the African American experience in cabinet-making. She looks particularly at the large population of free black cabinetmakers in New Orleans, with many of them owning their own slaves and living a life quite different from enslaved African Americans. Although there were free black cabinetmakers it was difficult for Moscou to find written documentation on them, mainly because librarians and archivists did not want to believe that there was a talented population of free blacks or that they were worthy of study. This population of free blacks that also included Thomas Day in North Carolina shows that much of the work completed by them "witnessed a blending of influences."¹⁰ Moscou has based her assertion on the cultural influences of New Orleans and the representation of the population that developed because of miscegenation among the European, Anglo and Creole communities in New Orleans. There was essentially a caste system based on this

⁹ Sharon Patton, "Antebellum Louisiana Artisans: The Black Cabinetmaker." *The International Review of African American Art: 19th Century African American Fine and Craft Arts of the South*, vol. 12, no. 3: 15

¹⁰ Margo Moscou, *New Orleans' Free Men of Color: Cabinetmakers in the New Orleans Furniture Trade, 1800-1850*. (New Orleans: Xavier Review Press, 2008), p. 40.

blending and free- people-of color were considered higher than enslaved blacks and also prospered as artisans by utilizing the various influences they drew from their networks within the city. In summary, Moscou finds:

The free-people-of-color cabinetmakers in antebellum New Orleans were part of a vibrant class of professionals – lawyers, craftsmen, businessmen. It was not until after the Civil War and growing cultural and institutional racism, along with the industrialization of furniture making-a perfect storm, if you will that collectively buried this generation.¹¹

My preliminary research on Hampton Institute’s program in cabinet-making indicates that there were a very few pieces of work completed by the students that may have been designed as original works. The majority of the works completed were copies of master pieces because the curriculum focused on making reproductions, repairing antiques and upholstering furniture. Therefore, for the students at Hampton, pieces of furniture can be viewed as symbols of freedom for some, assimilation for others, and the move to towards social and economic uplift. W.E.B. Du Bois, sociologist, writer, and early civil rights leader, speaks to this blending of influences, when he wrote about “the two-ness of the Negro.”

Du Bois describes how complex it was for a free black or an enslaved African American to survive in early America. When one looks at the furniture created by these artisans, we may ask how much of the design was their own. Du Bois has ascertained that,

Black artisans in the New World worked under a set of circumstances that were unique to the American experiences; as slaves, he argued, they had the European world imposed upon their collective consciousness, but as

¹¹Moscou, introduction, xix.

artists they had two wells of creativity from which to drink-Africa and Europe.”¹²

Interesting enough, Margo Moscou’s position shows that the duality that Du Bois speaks of may have been true of slave artisans working in other crafts, but that this really “did not extend to free people of color and especially free black cabinetmakers, whose focus seemed to stay closely with European styles and culture.”¹³ So Hampton’s methods for teaching of cabinet-making were not so far off base of this pattern. Moscou’s argument shows that the assimilation of free blacks in New Orleans where a mulatto population was perhaps strongest would significantly impact the identity one leaned towards (European) and Hampton Institute would also lean toward European aesthetics based on the race of the founder, the teachers, and what types of designs would sell.

Although Moscou had difficulty finding documentary records for all of the artisans that she located in New Orleans, she was able to learn much from the work of private collectors of this area of material culture. Private collectors have contributed significantly to the scholarship on African American cabinetmakers and artisans. One significant contributor is Derrick Beard, who was initially based in Chicago and has amassed an expansive collection of African American decorative art that he has documented and exhibited.

This African American collector was voted by *Art & Antiques Magazine* as one of America’s top 100 collectors in 1994. He has collected a number of pieces of furniture by Thomas Day as well as other examples from East Coast and New Orleans

¹²Moscou, *New Orleans Free Men of Color*, 40.

¹³Moscou, *New Orleans Free Men of Color*, 40.

cabinetmakers, some of which were included in Margo Moscou's study. Beard's collecting and research resulted in a traveling furniture exhibition entitled, "Sankofa," that toured throughout the United States in the late 1990's to early 2000. Sankofa, a popular African proverb used by a large segment of the African American population, "means ...the word in the Akan language of Ghana that translates to "go back and get it" (san – to return; ko-to go; fa-to look, to seek and take)" With Beard's use of Sankofa as the title of his exhibition, he played off of the "Asante Adrinka symbols of a bird with its head turned backwards taking an egg off its back, or of a stylized heart shape."¹⁴ This particular pattern resembles the carved design on the doors of the secretary that Thomas Day is most noted for. (*figure 2*)

Beard's decision to use the Sankofa symbol as the title of the exhibition and as the stylistic representation for an African influence on Day generated a lot of discussion. Thomas Day was the topic of several presentations at a Winterthur Conference in 1987, entitled, "Comments on African American Contributions to America Material Life." Jonathan Prown and Theodore Landmark discussed the influences on Thomas Day at this conference. It was revealed at the Winterthur conference that letters to Day from his brother John who had immigrated to Liberia had been found in a religious archive. The letters revealed that John was also trained as a cabinetmaker and immigrated to West Africa to establish missionary schools, where he may have taught cabinetry. A fire in 1979 destroyed Thomas Day's workplace in Milton, North Carolina, and may also have destroyed the evidence."¹⁵ Many researchers including Derrick Beard believe that the

¹⁴<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sankofa>

¹⁵Theodore C. Landmark ."Comment on African American Contributions to American Life." *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 33, Issue 4, Winter (1998): 270.

evidence that may have been lost showed that some of Day's designs represent African imagery that he saw or that his brother who traveled throughout West Africa shared with him. There are also faces of African origin carved in a stairwell that Day completed.

Jonathan Prown, noted scholar of Colonial furniture, also presented a lecture about Thomas Day's work during the Winterthur symposium. Prown argued that Day's work did not incorporate African designs or symbolism as proposed by Derrick Beard. Instead, Prown "encourage[d] serious scholars to find evidence of a direct African stylistic connection between John's school and Thomas's work." Thus, Prown advises "interpretive caution" on the question of whether Day's work contained references to West African signs and symbols. Although Prown is not very familiar with the history of art in West Africa he also asserted that historical and artifactual evidence indicates few if any strong stylistic connections to African traditions in Day's work. He argues for in-depth study of the structural and stylistic characteristics of Day's work. Overall, he characterized Day's iconography as idiosyncratic and highly innovative:

Prown and Hurst have produced a model of such comprehensive material culture analysis in *Southern Furniture*, where they documented the work of numerous early southern cabinetmakers. No comparable monograph exists of the work of any black antebellum southern artisan... yet interest in Day has emerged slowly through the research of North Carolina scholars such as Laurel Sneed and Mary Lyons, who have documented numerous examples of his work without undertaking the kind of stylistic and construction analyses now associated with such studies." Day is not included in Prown and Hurst's book because his cabinetry, despite his Virginia roots, is not included in the Williamsburg collection, which served as the source of the authors' research.¹⁶

Landmark's analysis of the context for identifying African American cultural traits draws on anthropologist, J. Lorand Matory argument that the transatlantic trade of cultural

¹⁶Landmark, Comment on African American Contributions, 270.

practices and the development of an African American cultural identity worked in both directions:

[A]cross the “black Atlantic, ... southern blacks and missionaries affecting material culture patterns and practices in Liberia; and complex cross-cultural fertilizations occurring throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among substantially diverse African and American peoples on both sides of the Atlantic.”¹⁷

Prown’s position is based on a “Euroamerican tendency to ascribe value based on “innovation” and “originality.”

As indicated by the Landmark article, there are several theories and explanations of why and what Thomas Day was thinking when he made his furniture. He makes three compelling observations about the papers presented at the conference that place Day in context with many of the free-people-of –color and enslaved like Thomas Jefferson’s slave, Hemings, and other African American artisans:

The works discussed in these papers are creative, artistically worthy, and distinctive, but their characteristics[of?] “Africanness” as commercially viable products remains a matter of conjecture until additional research demonstrates more direct references and connections.

He further goes on to state:

All of the products here were produced by African American artisans primarily for Caucasian purchasers. While blacks may have used or been exposed to these architectural elements, furnishings, or stonewares, the first purchasers of this artisanry were whites who had a consumer’s approval over the forms and styles produced by these black artisans. Day’s furniture similarly emerged from market influences favoring the then-current pillar-and-scroll style and would not have been purchased by homeowners and public officials in North Carolina and Virginia if they had not appealed to prevailing commercial tastes.

¹⁷Landmark, “Comment on African American Contributions, 276.

Also,

Unlike more personal domestic vernacular and utilitarian goods, such as baskets and quilts, these “big ticket” items, such as large cabinets and mammoth stonewares, were produced for commercial distribution within a white society dominated by racist labor practices, and the fashions and tastes of these slave-owning purchases prevailed over persistences of African styles or craft practices.¹⁸

Thomas Day’s contributions as a noted cabinetmaker has grown beyond the exhibition that Derrick Beard initiated. Recently, a secretary built by Day from Derrick Beard’s collection sold to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston placing Day in the same league in Decorative Arts as white artisans. The Empire style secretary sold at auction, November 20, 2010. Additionally, The North Carolina Museum of History also owns several Thomas Day pieces which were obtained from former North Carolina Governor David S. Reid’s estate (Governor from 1851 to 1854).

¹⁸Landmark: 272.

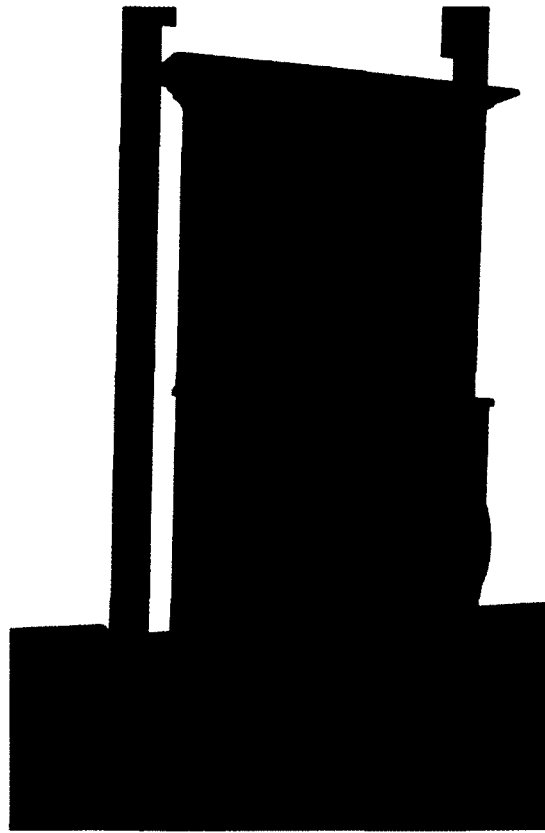


Figure 2 Thomas Day Secretary on display at Hampton University Museum. Long term loan from Derrick Beard. Reuben V. Burrell, Photographer.

In addition to Derrick Beard, there are other collections and collectors who worked in the same vein to bring African American tradesmen to the forefront. African American cultural historian, lecturer and collector, the late Carroll Greene, along with friends, amassed a large number of objects made by African Americans. As Greene stated, “unlike Europeans, who brought their material culture in the holds of ships, African arrivals carried only memories and shackles. Their culture was held not in steamer trunks but in their hearts and minds and in the skills of their hands.”¹⁹

¹⁹The *Country Home*, “Article on Carroll Greene,” January/February (1997): 41.

The works acquired by Greene and his colleagues are known as the Acacia Collection. This collection has traveled to various venues including the “*American I Am*” exhibition that was organized in 2009 by the Cincinnati Museum Center for radio talk show host and public icon, Tavis Smiley. After the unexpected death of Carroll Greene, the board began looking for a permanent home for the collection. To date, a permanent home has not been secured. Fortunately for scholars of African American cabinet-making, there are several pieces of furniture included in the collection that range from the very crude works of enslaved people to the refined pieces of Thomas Day.

Nineteenth-century cabinetmakers also worked in Northern cities like Philadelphia. The Pennsylvania Abolition Society and the Society of Friends maintained a directory of African American artisans and crafts-persons. According to Steven Lore Jones, an independent scholar who specializes in African American art, architecture, crafts, cartoons, dolls and books found that by the mid-nineteenth century “there were 20 cabinetmakers including Thomas Charnock, John Randolph and Samuel Van Brackle in Philadelphia.” He also found “that here were several African Americans “skilled and engaged” in the making of furniture with only one example identified.” “Thomas Gross, Jr. and his father, Thomas Gross, Sr. were active cabinetmakers in Philadelphia from the first decade of the century until the end of the 1830s. Gross pieces were signed (in pencil) on the bottom of the drawer.” Jones found that “only about 10% of the furniture of this era from either African American or white craftsmen is signed in this way”²⁰ Jones further explains how “skilled African Americans often could not work full time in their

²⁰Steven Loring Jones, “A Keen Sense of the Artistic: African American Material Culture in the 19th Century Philadelphia.” *The International Review of African American Art: 19th Century African American Artisans of the North and West, Part 2*, vol. 12, no. 2: 6 - 7.

fields because of racial discrimination that grew more pronounced as the century progressed. This might provide an additional explanation for the lack of surviving work; only 40% of African Americans with cabinet-making skills were actively able to engage themselves in the area out of “choice or necessity.”²¹

As I indicated earlier, in spite of the growing scholarship on black cabinetmakers during the antebellum period, there has been less focus on the newly-freed African American artisan in the aftermath of slavery. The talents of these artisans as well as countless others who were in need of and benefited from the education offered by Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton (HNAI), Virginia are central to this study. While African Americans were not a homogeneous group, they negotiated the social pressures and challenges of the American society that was ambivalent about their roles in its development. Their work and contributions to the society should be acknowledged in more detail.

In this dissertation, I add to the scholarship on African Americans by looking at how the work of the cabinet-making department of the HNAI School was important to African American achievement, self-sufficiency, and empowerment within the different social and political climates of the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Within the school itself, these goals were only achieved because of the multifaceted and often-times controversial curriculum that combined manual training, strict discipline, and academic courses throughout Hampton’s history.

The controversy surrounding the curriculum was debated throughout the black community. Whereas some felt that the manual training program promoted by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the founder of HNAI and the first principal, was the white man’s

²¹ Jones, “A Keen Sense of the Artistic,” 6 – 7.

attempt to keep blacks enslaved and to deny them their creativity, I argue that there is much more to the story. For, as the preceding overview of African American artisanship and furniture-making shows, skilled craftsmanship was a highly respected form of achievement among black and white Americans alike, up to the middle of the twentieth century.

Samuel Chapman Armstrong was aware of the controversy surrounding his emphasis on manual training in the Hampton curriculum. As he wrote in his first Annual Report of 1870:

The plan of combining mental and physical labor is a priority full of objections. It is admitted that it involves friction, constant embarrassment, and apparent disadvantage to educational advancement, as well as to the profits of various industries.²²

This statement by Armstrong reflects that he realized that there were reservations against, even ironies about, training a group of people newly out of slavery how to work. Why would he teach a people who had been enslaved and already labored with their hands to build this country how to work? Surely, they had already worked with their hands long enough! Should not their education focus primarily on training the intellect, especially as it was their intellectual capacities that white society denied? Rationales for Armstrong's ideal and philosophy will be explained in chapters to follow. Through his experience at Hampton, General Armstrong's knowledge of and respect for African Americans and later American Indians increased as he lived and worked with them for twenty-five years.

²²Frances Greenwood Peabody. *Education for Life: The Story of Hampton Institute*. (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1919), 46.

My study uses an interdisciplinary approach to incorporate evidence from history, African American studies, material culture studies, and public history. This approach is essential because it allows for a discussion of how the furniture made in the furniture trades, cabinet-making and upholstery departments between 1868 through the 1950s can be viewed as the production of physical products as well as a metaphor for the advancement of African Americans at home and in the community at large. Not only did Hampton's program contribute to the social behaviors of the campus and the local community, but the furniture completed in the department helped students pay for their education and also helped the school to survive until the industrial arts became too expensive for the school to continue to operate.

In spite of many scholars utilizing the rich data available in Hampton's archival collection to write about the history of Hampton Institute (University), there has been little scholarly attention paid to this aspect of the school's history and its impact on African Americans. Instead emphasis has mainly been placed on debates about manual training versus a liberal arts curriculum for African Americans: a subject of the famous debates between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Additionally, a few works look at the stages of curriculum development at Hampton. Most notable among this group are the dissertations by William Hannibal Robinson whose research chronicles the history of the Normal School and more recently, Linda Bart Tucker, who wrote about the science curriculum at Hampton. Tucker's work eventually became a part of a permanent exhibition at the Museum of American History at the Smithsonian. However, these studies do not cover the furniture in the cabinet-making department.

This in-depth examination of the utilitarian, unpolished furniture made in the early days of Hampton's trade school, as well as the beautiful decorative pieces of furniture made later, contributes to an understanding of the interconnections between written disciplinary directives which mainly deal with the curriculum of the cabinet-making department and the handcrafted products for which Hampton became well-known.

Methodology and overview of the chapters

In the chapters that follow, I discuss ways in which furniture-making represented different ideologies within three major periods as reflected in the changing curriculum and the associated furniture products. The first period, from 1868–1893, set in motion Samuel Chapman Armstrong's educational philosophy of "The Head, Hand and the Heart." Armstrong's ideals corresponded with the crusade for the personal and social uplift of the newly freed population of African Americans who had undergone years of enslavement. He found that in developing the Trade program, manual labor could be viewed with more dignity than the callousness of slavery and the men and women would be taught scientifically to produce the most skilled and capable individuals possible.

The industrialization of the cabinet-making trade, from 1893 – 1917, occurred during the administration of Armstrong's successor, Principal Hollis Burke Frissell who occupied the office during the second period of this study. Funding from the John Slater Fund and other philanthropists placed Hampton at the top of schools that supported Industrial training. The institution became a model for many industrial programs both nationally and internationally. An extensive campaign propagated information on

Hampton's Trade program and the availability of its products for sale increased the revenue coming into Hampton. This increased funding impacted, in various ways, the educational philosophy relating to the cabinet-making trade. The trade school, on the whole, developed as a viable economic resource for both the school and the students, which in turn made it possible to increase the size of the student body in all courses of study and the revenue of the school as whole. As a result, Hampton graduated more students who returned to their communities to work, spreading the message of uplift and the skills to achieve it among the African American population at large.

The third period covers the years between 1917 and the 1950s. By 1918, the educational philosophy of the cabinet-making department transitioned again as the students questioned Hampton's practice of hiring a majority-white faculty and Board of Trustees. Student agitation about the composition of the faculty and board resulted in Hampton becoming a four year college and the professionalization of the Trades. This change was also reflected in the production and distribution of the furniture produced at Hampton. Therefore, the evolution of the furniture curriculum and the student body at Hampton through this and the preceding periods was tied tightly on a larger front to the social and cultural development of African Americans via the positions they obtained and the types of homes they established.

A major sign that the times were changing at Hampton occurred when the Institute hired its first African American president, Alonzo Moron. Moron entered Hampton Institute's Academy in 1923, graduating in 1927. He finished Hampton with a high school degree and a diploma in upholstering. Moron went on to complete degrees at Brown University and the University of Pittsburg. He participated in political activism

by assisting Hampton students with boycotts of downtown Hampton for equal rights in restaurants and by facilitating the discussion of equal rights in local schools and businesses.

My study of the literature suggests that Hampton's curriculum mirrors many of the trends in American mainstream society. For example, the establishment and promotion of a certain type of American household, which focused developing customs through home furnishings and material goods was propagated to White America as well as to African Americans. This type of promotion was often found at the Fairs and Expositions I will discuss briefly in chapter three. This assertion is also articulated in an article discussing Gustav Stickley's influence on American homes and the emerging middle class:

Every distinct style in furniture, considered in its purity, met the needs and expressed the character of the people who made it and the age in which it was made. During the nineteenth century, a broader population began to purchase furnishings and household goods in the quantity, variety, and lower costs made possible by mechanized production. Domestic furnishings were "read" for information about their owners' identities and values. The purchase and presentation of furnishings assumed an ethical dimension as styles, materials, and construction methods delineated the purchaser's civility- social, intellectual, and cultural. In effect, interiors were "art factual portraits"²³

To show that the cabinet-making department impacted the social and economic prosperity of the Hampton student, primary documents from the Hampton University Archives will comprise the bulk of the materials used in this study. These documents

²³Arlette Klaric, "Gustav Stickley's Design for the Home: An Activist Aesthetic for the Upwardly Mobile," in *Seeing High & Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture*.ed. Patricia Johnston. (California, University of California Press, 2006),178.

include curriculum for the cabinet-making department throughout the years, class rosters, brochures and pamphlets as well as a vast array of historical photographs. The Hampton University Archives houses over fifty thousand photographs and glass negatives including Francis Benjamin Johnston's 1900 photographs exhibited at the Paris Exposition.

The other significant period of photographs that are utilized were taken by Reuben V. Burrell, a graduate of Hampton Institute who was hired in 1946 as the school's photographer. As the campus photographer for over 65 years, Burrell's work is an important resource representing the 1940s and 1950s. In addition, I draw upon an inventory of furniture that has been identified as made at Hampton. These pieces are located in the museum's collection and private collections. Finally, conversations with cabinet-making graduates have contributed greatly to this work.

Chapter 1

African Americans' Search for Education as Enslaved and Free People

Here, at a stroke of the pen, was erected a government of millions of men,-
-and not ordinary men, either, but black men emasculated by a peculiarly
complete system of slavery, centuries old; and now, suddenly, violently,
they come into a new birthright, at a time of war and passion, in the midst
of the stricken, embittered population of their former masters.²⁴
W. E. B. Du Bois [1901]

“I crep ‘long mighty tejus,
gittin’ a crum here an dar
until I cud read de bible
by skippin’ de long words,
tolerable well. Dat was da
start uv my eddicashun”²⁵

Reverend John Jasper

Just Wanting to Learn my ABC's

Much scholarship has been written on the African American's path to education and the results show again and again that African Americans are not a homogeneous group. However, there is also overwhelming evidence testifying to the commonality of the search for a literacy that was based on knowing one's ABC and beyond.²⁶ The search

²⁴ W. E. B. DuBois, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 87, (1901): 354-365.

²⁵ John Jasper, introduction to *"De Sun Do Move,"* trans. John Bryan (Richmond: Charles Creek Publishing, 2008); vii. ; I crept along mighty tedious getting a crumb here and there until I could read the Bible by skipping the long words tolerable well. That was the start of my education.

²⁶ Albert J. Raboteau wrote an article, "Praying the ABC's: Reflections on Faith in History," where he describes missionary Harriet Ware attending a funeral on one of the South Carolina Sea Islands. Ware describes, "As we drew near to the grave we heard all the children singing their A, B, C, through and

was at no time more pronounced than after the Civil War. There was much chaos after the war and everyone— white, black, rich, and poor— was struggling to redefine the South as well as the North. Noted historian, John Hope Franklin states in *From Slavery to Freedom*; “that from 1865 to the end of the century the United States was picking up the threads of her social, political, and economic life, so abruptly cut in 1861, and attempting to tie them together in a new pattern as a result of the war.” Franklin aptly describes the dismay of the many affected by the war and shows a wider perspective stressing that “reconstruction in 1865, was, indeed, nation-wide.”²⁷

Many white southerners found themselves without homes, money and free labor to recoup what they had lost. On the other hand, the white Northerners who remained in the South were a divisive group. There were those who found opportunities and wanted to help the newly freed blacks, while others on the opposite end of the spectrum exploited the formerly enslaved refugees as well as many of the white Southerners. Life was difficult for everyone based on economic status and, in the case of African Americans, race. These factors were reflected not only in the rural areas but also in the urban centers. This also affected more than black and white Americans who had lived in the U.S. for generations but also Italians, Irish, and other immigrants as well. John Hope Franklin asserts that “...the new order of things was the result of the triumph of industrialism over the agrarian way of life....The new and old bustling cities were symbols of triumph,

through again, as they stood waiting round the grave for the rest to assemble..” in *Cross Currents*: Fall 1992, Vol. 42, Issue 3: 314.

²⁷ John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, Third Edition. (New York: Vantage Books, 1969), 298.

while the wasted and abandoned lands of the South signified the defeat of the old agrarianism.”²⁸

With everything in disarray after the war, the government tried to step in to help restore some type of order for freedmen during the Reconstruction era (1865-1869). A part of the United States Department of War, the Freedmen’s Bureau was headed by Union Army General Oliver O. Howard. Although the Bureau was initiated, there was still discord among the politicians. After the death of President Lincoln, things became even more unorganized and the political climate even more chaotic. Corruption was rampant and it was obvious that the newly reorganized population was not ready for political life. As John Hope Franklin put it, “over four million Negroes who were without experience in public affairs...” and “...to these must be added the millions of Europeans who poured into the country in every Post-war decade and who muddled political waters considerably.”²⁹

Two things were necessary to try to regain some control over the nation: education and land. Education was difficult because of the segregation of the common schools. The wealthier children had first priority, the poorer whites were given a better chance and “schooling was far less available to African Americans and native Americans than to whites.” Although there were schools for free African Americans everyone was not treated fairly, for:

Before the Civil War, free African Americans living primarily in cities in the North and upper South were permitted to attend school, but they were often segregated into separate and usually inferior facilities. Many of these free blacks formed their own schools taught by African American

²⁸ Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 298.

²⁹ Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 299.

teachers. While it was not against the law to educate slaves in the colonial period, they were generally denied formal instruction. In the wake of Nat Turner's 1831 slave rebellion in Virginia, however, Southerners began legally prohibiting the education of slaves.³⁰

These treatments led to many creative solutions. The publications of historians, Heather Andrea Williams, Robert C. Morris and Jacqueline Jones show that enslaved and freed African Americans educated themselves through various means.³¹ The research of these scholars shows that prior to Reconstruction, although it was illegal to teach enslaved to read and write in most southern states, it was not uncommon to find that many freed people of color and some whites defied these laws. White planters, for example, found it advantageous for enslaved overseers to keep records and read written instructions and some Christians believed all people should have access to the Bible. Grey Gundaker and other scholars have found that the quest for learning to read and to write among enslaved African Americans was accomplished in many ways – most often, “hidden.” The most noted way reading and writing was obtained was through masters teaching slaves how to read the bible or slaves teaching themselves to read the bible. Also, slaves that were hired out would often time be taught to read or to write although writing was not always embraced by the masters. Some artisans were able to garner snippets of literacy in their travels. Gundaker finds that:

Despite prohibitions against their literacy, skilled artisans occasionally included instructive written messages on their works. For example, a famous enslaved potter named Dave... who also worked for a newspaper, inscribed rhymed couplets on ceramic

³⁰ Colonial Williamsburg, *A Publick Education: A Teacher's Guide with Historical Background and Lesson Plans*, (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, 2008), 10-11.

³¹ Heather Andrea Williams, *African American Education in Slavery and Freedom: self-taught*. (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 3.

vessels in Edenton, South Carolina in the 1830s though 1850s at a time when teaching blacks to read was illegal.³²

Carter G. Woodson argued that about ten percent of the enslaved could read at a time when much of the southern white population could not read and write their names. Historian Janet Cornelius has suggested an even greater number, although the threat of punishment ensured that much learning went on in secret. As Cornelius shares, “slaves themselves believed they faced terrible punishments if whites discovered they could read and write. A common punishment for slaves who had attained more skills ... was amputation.”³³ Many of the individuals that taught African Americans were women for the spouses or children of some plantation owners taught their slaves in secret. Frederick Douglass, for example was taught how to read by the wife of the second man who owned him. He recalls that:

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters.³⁴

This was a very dangerous proposition for those who elected to defy the law and the wishes of the masters of these plantations:

Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read.³⁵

³² Grey Gundaker, “Hidden Education Among African American’s During Slavery,” *Teacher’s College Record*, vol. 109, no. 7 (2007):11.

³³ Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *“When I Can Read my Title Clear”: Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 174.

³⁴ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (1845)*. (New York: Signet, 1968), 15.

³⁵ Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 15.

Both white and African American women played a key role in the education of blacks during slavery and Reconstruction. In looking at the roles of early women educators, Kay Taylor presented the case that black women favored a more holistic approach. She argues that:

White women viewed teaching as temporary, evidenced in their average tenure of two to three years between 1860 and 1870 ... This is in drastic opposition to Black women of the time, whose purposes were grounded in a lifelong dedication to the uplift of their race in all facets of life, and especially through education. ...unlike their white female counterparts, African-American women did not have a history of existing in a sphere separate from African-American men... Thus, throughout the nineteenth century, freed Blacks of the North as well as emancipated African Americans in the South espoused the notion of 'race uplift' as central to their educational philosophy. This philosophy meant simply that the educational obtainments of all African-Americans, gender notwithstanding would be for the advancement and 'uplift' of the race.³⁶

White educators also embraced the theme of improvement. Willie Lee Rose, the author of *The Port Royal Experiment* wrote that after the Civil War and also during Reconstruction many of the first to educate the African American refugees (called contrabands) were white women who were single, from well-to-do homes and often-times abolitionists from New England. Some of these single women were sent by The American Missionary Association, an institution that was established to assist the freed African Americans. This organization's aim was "to bring full and equal privileges of citizenship to the black population of the United States during the latter half of the 19th century, leading into the 20th century."³⁷ Many of the women were also Quakers and they dedicated a great deal of time to educating African Americans. One young missionary

³⁶ Kay Ann Taylor, "Mary S. Peake and Charlotte L. Forten: Black Teachers During the Civil War and Reconstruction," *The Journal of Negro Education*, 74 (2): 2.

³⁷ <http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/1998/edu/charleston/ama.htm>

and her friend established a school in Williamsburg, Virginia, in February 1866, very close to the time that Samuel Chapman Armstrong came to work in Hampton, Virginia. Margaret Newbold Thorpe, the main teacher, was born into a prominent Philadelphia family and was a devoted Episcopalian of orthodox Quaker ancestry on her mother's side. She kept a diary of her work in Yorktown and the Williamsburg area. Thorpe and her associate:

Martha Haines, landed at Yorktown and opened school at Fort Magruder just outside of Williamsburg. They were sent by the Friends' Association of Philadelphia and Its Vicinity for the Relief of the Colored Freedmento teach in Virginia. The Chief activities of the Association in that state were confined to the Yorktown-Williamsburg area where thousands of Negro refugees had congregated after the Federal victory at Williamsburg in May 1862.³⁸

These two teachers left Philadelphia to live in very rough conditions similar to that of their "scholars." They shared some of the same fears as the African Americans they worked with, including retaliation from white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan. All ages attended the school no matter the obstacles they encountered, particularly the adults. Richard C. Morton who edited Thorpe's letters, states how, "she also emphasizes the parents and the entire community." One very compelling account she recalled in her letters reflects the sincerity of an elder who wanted to learn to read and had acquired some lessons illegally from a Southern woman. It also shows the danger involved in African Americans' path to education:

A new night scholar, an old man who can read readily, told me all he knew he learned in a little night school taught "on de sly" by a white lady, a Southerner. "Old Marster" would "whip them all to pieces" if he found it out, but "Thank the Lord he never did."³⁹

³⁸ Margaret Newbold Thorpe and Richard L. Morton, ed. "Life in Virginia by a "Yankee Teacher", *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 64, no. 2 (April 1956): 180.

³⁹ Thorpe, "Life in Virginia," 180.

The two women found a very willing community of both young and old who had a thirst for education and made it to the little school at Fort Magruder, Williamsburg.

During her tenure in Williamsburg, Miss Thorpe met with General Armstrong on several occasions. She recalled a surprise visit by General Armstrong and his friend to the home and school at Fort Magruder on a Sunday morning. The two school teachers and their guests attended church, followed by a dinner prepared by their African American cook. Thorpe and Haines became good friends with Armstrong and most of all, they were greatly impressed by General Armstrong and his plans for his Normal School. Thorpe described the visit to Hampton noting that:

In May we went home, spent two days at Ft. Monroe, and were so interested in the Hampton Normal School which is already established on a firm foundation, and Gen. Armstrong's enthusiasm and faith cannot fail of making it a success.⁴⁰

Unlike Armstrong who stayed at Hampton for twenty-five years, Thorpe and her colleague stayed at Fort Magruder for three years and went on to do the same type of work in North Carolina for a few years.

Like Thorpe, often young women who moved to the South to teach kept diaries, as did Laura M. Towne, of Philadelphia, who named the Penn School after the founder of her native State, Pennsylvania. Miss Towne and her friend Ellen Murray, also of Philadelphia, started Penn School in 1862. Known as the Port Royal Experiment, the two women were joined by a young free African American woman from Philadelphia, Charlotte Forten. This "Experiment," a program to educate newly freed African

⁴⁰ Thorpe, "Life in Virginia," 180.

Americans behind Union lines on the Sea Islands of South Carolina, was not only documented in the diaries of these three women but also documented by the Civil War general, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who like Samuel Chapman Armstrong led a troop of black soldiers during the war. Towne and Murray both stayed at Penn School and are buried on the campus. They are honored every November with a Founder's Day Celebration by Penn School graduates and the community. Charlotte Forten did not stay at Penn School. She lived and worked there for three years and then returned to Philadelphia where she continued her missionary work after her marriage to the Reverend Francis J. Grimke (also a missionary and the son of abolitionist). Forten is also commemorated every year as the first black teacher at Penn School.

White women were not the only pioneers facilitating the education of freed blacks, as Forten's career shows. There were many African American women who were very important in the education and uplift of their own people. The scholarship on African American women educators is still in its infancy, but among the early figures is Mary Peake whose role as an educator and an advocate for schools in Hampton was extremely significant to the citizens in the city of Hampton, as it is to today's African Americans. Her life and work is documented in various publications recounting the history of HNIA as well as the surrounding schools.

A free woman, born in Norfolk Virginia to a mulatto mother and an English father, Mary Peake was educated both in Norfolk and Alexandria, Virginia. When she returned to Norfolk at the age of sixteen, she taught adult slaves who were eager to learn. She eventually moved to Hampton and married Thomas Peake, a freed man. There she defied laws when she began to teach slaves to read and write prior to the American

Missionary Association entering the Hampton area. Lewis C. Lockwood, the agent sent to Fort Monroe by the American Missionary Association described Mary Peake's importance to black education in the early accounts of the development of schools for blacks in Hampton. He praised her determination noting that:

Up to the time of the burning of Hampton, she was engaged in instructing children and adults through her shrewdness and the divine protection eluding the vigilance of conservators of the slave law.⁴¹

Two white women, who were pioneer educators in Hampton, also documented Peake's work. Mary Frances Armstrong, the daughter of Samuel Armstrong, and fellow teacher, Helen W. Ludlow, wrote a book about Hampton's founding and the schools that were already established. Written in 1874, the book is entitled, *Hampton and Its Students by Two of its Teachers, Mrs. M. F. Armstrong and Helen W. Ludlow*. Despite the paternalistic and condescending attitudes displayed in their accounts, they do show the importance of Mary Peake in black education. Peake is remembered for teaching students under the Emancipation Oak that is located at the entrance of Hampton University today. The limbs of this massive tree spread over one hundred feet in diameter and provided the shade for the students that Peake taught. The story of Peake is still told to visitors today along with the fact that The Emancipation Oak was where the citizens of Hampton heard the Proclamation declaring that they were free. The Emancipation Oak is one of five national historic landmarks on the campus and was also named one of the 10 Great Trees of the World by the National Geographic Society.

⁴¹ Lewis C. Lockwood, *Two Black Teachers during the Civil War: Mary S. Peake the Colored Teacher at Fort Monroe*. (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 14.

During the Civil War the Union army was able to capture coastal areas while the areas inland remained under Confederate control. Many slaves who escaped during the Civil War sought refuge near Hampton, as they had in the Sea Islands. General Butler declared three escaped slaves “contraband of war” at Fort Monroe in 1861. The name “contrabands” was eventually applied to all escapees. Butler began the Butler School right next to the Emancipation Oak where Peake taught, providing a proper building for her school. An account in *The Southern Workman*, Hampton Institute’s magazine, states that:

General Butler ordered a large schoolhouse built in a field of the Wood farm, on the county road, near the great live oak at the head of the Hampton Hospital.”⁴²

Today, the country road has become Emancipation Oak Drive which leads to the entrance of the Veterans Administration Hospital, formerly the Old Soldiers Home and hospital. *The Southern Workman* also published an account of the establishment of the Butler School in the oral history of Ned Ricks who was one of the oldest farm hands employed at the Normal School. He recalled that General Butler had the school built in the spring. It was:

Built of wood in the form of a Greek cross, its arms were thirty feet wide and a hundred and eight feet from end to end, with latticed porches, a central belfry, and many tall windows. The interior was one great room without partitions. Rows of desks lined one long side of each arm, the other side being furnished with benches that could be pulled around to form classes.⁴³

Butler’s school was but one of numerous schools in Hampton that were established for the “Contrabands” including a school that was housed in the burned

⁴²*The Southern Workman*, “The Evolution of Whittier School,” Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, (May 1906): 286.

⁴³*The Southern Workman*, (May 1906) 286-287.

Hampton courthouse. In 1865, when the whites returned to Hampton to rebuild, “the former courthouse, which had been for two years used as a schoolhouse by the American Missionary Association, it was given back to the town by the United State Government.” In lieu of it the Butler School house was turned over to the Association by General O. O. Howard. Mary Peake is mentioned again with the reference that , “Peake’s little school house, grown now to over six hundred, found itself again in the neighborhood of its original home, under superintendence of the A.M.A., with a corps of missionary teachers.”⁴⁴

Robert Eng’s *Freedom’s First Generation* (1979) also described Peake as a major figure in the education of slaves as well as in the reconstruction of the city of Hampton, and the development of the Institute. Although Peake died at the age of thirty- nine, her impact was felt throughout the development of education in Hampton. She also helped to start the Whittier School, located on the campus of the Hampton Normal School. It was founded as a practice school for the Normal School students.

The other contraband and freedmen’s schools, some supervised by missionaries from the Society of Friends, were often crowded. The emergence of the Butler School helped to expand the opportunities for education. *The Southern Workman* and other publications are excellent resources in providing not only an overview of the educational requirements that the newly freed African Americans demanded but the role of African Americans in the City of Hampton in their education. These early works also cover the role of General Armstrong, who also established the Lincoln School in 1866. The establishment of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was born out of a community of Blacks who sought and provided for their own education, despite the

⁴⁴*The Southern Workman*, May 1906: 287.

dangers and obstacles in realizing a dream - one shared by missionaries and others sympathetic to the cause.

Although the city of Hampton's African American population worked hard for education and land opportunities, it was a struggle. In addition to what General Butler and Mary Peake had initiated, educational opportunities in Hampton and the surrounding area became more readily available during Reconstruction with the assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau also assisted poor white Southerners. Fairly successful, Bureau workers helped to re-establish communities as well as establish schools. The establishment of schools was just as important as obtaining land to the newly freed population, because despite being placed in horrid living conditions and the other obstacles they faced, associated with this new freedom, Blacks still prioritized education. General Armstrong's daughter later wrote in a biography of Armstrong about the African Americans' thirst for knowledge:

Ignorant as these people were, they knew that they were free, and in no way did they mean to trifle with their new-found blessing. They had a curiously quick appreciation of the fact that freedom meant little to them unless they knew how to use it, and they discerned for themselves that their primary need was education. After the President's proclamation, published in October, 1862, the demand for schools steadily increased, and as the opportunities for their safe establishment and support increased also.⁴⁵

Yet as can be seen in the exploration of the founding of HNIA, the task of promoting the improvement of black prospects for better lives in freedom was enormous. For example, the city of Hampton, like many southern rural areas, was left depleted because the white southerners burned what they could not take and left nothing for the

⁴⁵Mary Frances Armstrong and Helen Ludlow, *Hampton and Its Students*. (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1874), 20.

new free population. Also, because the enslaved had been so deprived of dignity and were ordered around during their enslavement, Armstrong and Ludlow further articulated the circumstances surrounding the need for education. For blacks,

Untrained as they were, even in respect to the simplest facts of life, their education had at the outset to be, of necessity, of the most elementary character, and such primary schools as could with comparative ease be supplied with both teachers and books amply sufficed, and for the first two or three years seemed to the blacks like the gates of heaven. As the number of fugitives near Hampton grew from month to month, and the prospect was that for many of them the settlement there would become a permanent home, these primary schools increased in number and capacity, one of them alone receiving within three months more than eight hundred scholars, while night-schools and Sunday-schools took in many who for various reasons could not attend during the usual day-school hours.⁴⁶

Despite the small victories, there were all types of obstacles in the way of African Americans realizing their dream of education. Increasingly, the notions of white superiority emerged particularly about the intellectual ability of African Americans, resulting in questions about whether or not funding schools for them was even necessary. One opponent to the claim that African Americans were intellectually inferior was missionary and educator, Charlotte Forten, teacher at the Penn School. Forten,

folded her assessment of southern African American intellect into a tirade against presumed white superiority as well as white hypocrisy. Among her students, she said, there were of course “some stupid ones,” but these were the minority. In her experience, most of the children in her St. Helena Island school learned quickly, and she was impressed that a large number of “grown people” also wanted to learn to read. “It is wonderful,” Forten remarked, “how a people who have been so long pushed to the

⁴⁶ Armstrong, *Hampton and Its Students*, 20.

earth, so imbruted as these have been can have so great a desire for knowledge, and such a capability for attaining it.”⁴⁷

Added to the frustration and confusion thrust upon the newly freed population, a large number of secret organizations began to help instill the new Black Codes developed to keep the Blacks in their place. Groups like “the Knights of the White Camelia, the Constitutional Union Guards, the Pale Faces, the White Brotherhood, the Council of Safety, the ’76 Association, and the Knights of the Klu Klux Klan were established during the decade after 1867.”⁴⁸ These groups spurred Du Bois and even Booker T. Washington to work against these stereotypes. Although Washington is often viewed as an accommodationist, more recent scholarship shows his undercover work to stamp out various injustices against African Americans, a topic discussed by new scholarship on Booker T. including the work of Virginia Dentz.

Along with the fight to prove that African Americans were intellectually equal there was also another faction of people who called for repatriation of blacks back to African countries. This idea dates back to the late eighteenth century century, with the American Colonization Society (ACS) early in the nineteenth century. The ACS, with the support of planters who wished to free their slaves without the threat of a free black population nearby, and certain Northern black leaders pushed this agenda. Leaders like Paul Cuffee, who was one of the men who helped to establish an African American settlement in Liberia, and later, Alexander Crummell, a black intellectual and advocate who saw colonization as

⁴⁷Williams, *African American education in slavery and freedom*, 154.

⁴⁸Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 323.

the best path to political and economic autonomy, were the key supporters. States such as Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Missouri supported the efforts of the ACS in order to attempt to rid themselves of free blacks.

President Lincoln carried the idea forward as a post-emancipation remedy for the large free black population that would result from his Proclamation. However, this option was not readily accepted by a majority of blacks who realized that they had given so much to America and deserved to be able to build their own communities and futures. Blacks were promised 40 acres and a mule and this directive never materialized for a majority of them. A directive, “Circular Order Thirteen of 28 July 1865” by the Bureau laid out a plan for the “distribution of confiscated land to ex-slaves.” However, before this order was instituted, it was rescinded by “Circular Order Fifteen, written at the Command of President Johnson.” The new directive was unfavorable for blacks for it “directed Bureau agents to return confiscated land to pardoned rebels and encouraged these same rebels to permit small plots to the black laborers they employed. In short, freedmen would get no governmentland; they were to return to their home plantations and work for their former owners.”⁴⁹

It was against this social and economic backdrop that General Armstrong began Hampton Institute. Yet there are scholars who feel that the mission of Armstrong and some of the institutions founded for blacks that modeled their programs after Hampton are included in the list of “Historically Black Colleges and Universities” (HBCUs) was

⁴⁹ Robert Engs, *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 102.

mainly to limit black workers to manual labor, and that this type of education was based on the notion that blacks were an inferior race. There is no doubt that there were prejudices among many of the founders and philanthropists who felt that they were superior (often it could not be hidden). A majority of them, including General Armstrong were extremely paternalistic towards the “Darker Race” and indeed saw nothing wrong with paternalism, seeing it as a responsibility imposed upon the privileged, but remaining ignorant—or willfully blind—toward its perpetuation of white power. In spite of those limitations, I find that Armstrong wanted Hampton to be a Normal school with an emphasis on manual training in an effort to prepare the graduates to return to their communities as teachers. He wanted them to be independent in a social climate that was continuously changing, and one that was not ready for freed blacks. Both men and women had to break into the work force. Thus, when the doors were not open for professional jobs, African Americans could still take care of themselves through land ownership and agriculture, which were at that time still the main ways of making a living for the U.S. population as a whole in regions with arable land.

When General Armstrong arrived as the Freedmen’s Bureau Superintendent, he was supportive of the efforts already established but felt that there was “a new idea for the solution of the Negro’s problem by combining with a practical school room education, the mental and moral uplift of industrial training and self-help.”⁵⁰

Establishment of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

⁵⁰ The Southern Workman

African Americans' demand for education throughout the nation was as great in Hampton and the Freedmen's Bureau attempted to meet this demand. It became the signature endeavor of this initiative:

The Bureau achieved its greatest success in education. It set up or supervised all kinds of schools: day, night, Sunday, and industrial schools, as well as colleges. It cooperated closely with philanthropic and religious organizations in the North in the establishment of many institutions. Among the schools founded in this period which received aid from the bureau were Howard University, Hampton Institute, St. Augustine's College, Atlanta University.⁵¹

The American Missionary Association and churches also took part in developing educational resources: "the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians were all active in establishing schools"⁵² and sent white missionaries to assist. After the Civil War, many black churches were started and they also founded schools to educate their own people.

There are several studies about the establishment of HBCUs. In an article in *PaedagogicaHistorica* on "Secondary Education and Emancipation: Secondary Schools for Freed Slaves in the American South, 1862-1875," Ronald E. Butchart and Amy F. Roller defined secondary education in the nineteenth century as, "... forms of education within which the curriculum took on a vocational cast (including prominently, teacher or "normal" training), or included relatively specialized science and mathematics."⁵³ Over 161 HBCUs were started by either the Freedmen's Bureau or independent organizations. These include "private black colleges such as Wilberforce University in Ohio, Tuskegee

⁵¹ Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 304.

⁵² Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 304.

⁵³ Ronald E. Butchart and Amy F. Roller, "Secondary Education and Emancipation: Secondary Schools for Freed Slaves in the American South, 1862-1875." *PaedagogicaHistorica: International Journal of the History of Education*, vol. 40, Issue 1 & 2, (April 2004): 1.

Institute in Alabama, and Bethune-Cookman College in Florida all founded by blacks. They had black Presidents from the beginning.”⁵⁴

Historian Fath Davis Ruffins summarized the establishment of HBCUs and the philanthropists who backed many of the schools succinctly:

General Samuel Chapman Armstrong founded Hampton Institute, from which Booker T. Washington received his degree. General O. O. Howard, the former director of the Freedmen’s Bureau, established Howard University in 1867. The Congregational Church founded Fisk University in 1867, and the United Church of Christ instituted Tugaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi in 1869. In Atlanta, Spellman College, the elite women’s college, was founded in memory of Laura Spellman Rockefeller in 1880, and Morehouse College was established by the Methodist Church. One of the most prolific philanthropists was Andrew Carnegie, whose foundation built libraries in dozens of Black colleges as well as in numerous American cities.⁵⁵

Ruffins also recognized the social factors underlying activities to help blacks:

While the philanthropically oriented whites who financially supported these institutions may have agreed with some of the then-current notions of Black inferiority, many of them had values similar (though not identical) to those of the Black Victorians mentioned earlier. Wealthy whites were more likely to see Black people as victims in need of general uplift, while Black Victorians were more likely to see progress and diversity within the Black community. In the view of most Black Victorians, only some Black people were in need of uplift; they saw themselves as having already achieved Anglo-American middle-class goals on a considerably smaller income.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ “The Tradition of White Presidents at Black Colleges,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, (Summer 1997): 94.

⁵⁵ Fath Davis Ruffins, “Mythos, Memory and History: African American Preservation Efforts, 1820 – 1990,” in *Museums and Communities*, eds. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kramer, Steve Lavine (D. C. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), 528.

⁵⁶ Ruffin, “Mythos, Memory, and History,” 528.

Despite all the set-backs and non-believers in black education, the establishment of HBCUs reflects the dedication of the supporters of education for African Americans. The thirst for knowledge described by both Ludlow and Forten shows that intellectually African Americans were capable of achieving education despite their circumstances. While Hampton is an example of the preeminent school for Industrial Education, Fisk is the example of the opposite sphere available for black uplift. African Americans in the nineteenth century were diverse and included freed-artisans with some monetary and educational advantages as well very poor and confused ex-slaves who had no idea where to turn, except to education which would aid them in overcoming the obstacles. Reconstruction was to aid in organizing the nation and did help many white and black citizens after the war, but as John Hope Franklin states:

The greatest failure of Reconstruction was economic. At the end of the period both white and Negro workers in the South were suffering from want and privation. In the North, where their lot was substantially better, they had not yet learned to cope with the powerful industrialists who were using political agencies as their most reliable allies and bribing officials with greater regularity than they paid their employees. While the white leaders of the South were preoccupied with questions of Negro suffrage and civil rights, Northern financiers and industrialists took advantage of the opportunity to impose their economic control on the South, and much of it has endured to this present day. The inability of the Negro to solve his problems was not altogether to his discredit. It was merely a symptom of the complexity of the new industrial American which baffled even the most astute of its citizens.⁵⁷

It is against this backdrop, including a widespread belief in White Supremacy that Armstrong began Hampton

⁵⁷Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 315.

Chapter 2

The Curriculum of Hampton Normal, Industrial and Agricultural Institute

Hampton's aim has been to secure for its men better economic conditions through giving them some special skill in the shop or on the farm, and through better economic conditions to insure better health, better homes, better schools, better churches. It has given its women a double training- a training in the all the home-making arts. To accomplish this purpose has meant an adaptation of education programs to actual conditions and a departure from traditional practices, more radical in the early days of the school than it would be today when so many of its practices have become commonplace in the educational world. Few can realize how great the pressure can be on an educational institution to conform to customary standards. Successful non-conformity requires vision, moral courage, and the will to do-qualities all present in General Armstrong, the founder, and Dr. Frissell, the builder, of Hampton Institute.⁵⁸

George P. Phenix, 1924

The Making of Hampton Normal, Industrial and Agricultural Institute

Armstrong "The Head, Hand and the Heart," 1868- 1893

To understand how HNAI developed and established the foundation for its later programs, it is important to review the philosophies and ethics of its founder, Samuel Chapman Armstrong by looking at his early education and lifestyle. I consider his family background and his exposure to different cultures pertinent to his work as an educator. These, along with the impact of the Civil War and his leadership of African Americans during the Civil War, all factor into understanding Armstrong's sensibilities.

⁵⁸ George P. Phenix, "Hampton Institute 1868-1923 (Concluded): Shaping Courses to Meet Changing Conditions," *Southern Workman*, vol. LII, No. 1. (January 1924): 28.

Samuel Armstrong was born January 30, 1839 in East Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii. He was a middle child, with nine siblings, of Richard and Clarissa Chapman Armstrong. Richard Armstrong and his wife were missionaries of the American Board from 1831 until 1847, serving all over the big island of Hawaii and the surrounding smaller islands. Early pioneers of the missionary efforts, the Armstrong's first served in Nukuhiva, a smaller less friendly island. Once the Armstrongs returned to Hawaii in 1832, where they were members of the Fifth Company of missionaries, Richard Armstrong was sent to Haiku on the island of Maui where he was quite successful:

During the next seven years, Richard Armstrong worked diligently on Maui. He became fluent in Hawaiian and preached his sermons in that language. He established mission churches, taught the natives to read, and doctored the ill.”⁵⁹

Because of his work with the indigenous population and his friendship with the king, in 1848, Reverend Armstrong became the Minister of Public Instruction. “Until his death in 1860, he was the major force behind education for Hawaiians in both missionary and public schools.”⁶⁰

As a youth, Armstrong accompanied his father throughout the kingdom on more than one occasion. His interaction with the native Hawaiians was intimate enough to give him a sensitivity that might not be found in other young white Americans. He describes the warmth of the Hawaiians, “...sleeping on their fragrant homemade mats, eating their

⁵⁹ Robert Engs. *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited: Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Hampton Institute, 1839-1893* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 8.

⁶⁰ C. Kalani Beyer, “The Connection of Samuel Chapman Armstrong as Both Borrower and Architect of Education in Hawai’i,” *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 47, no.1 (February 2007): 24. Kalani Beyer’s study shows how second generation missionaries in Hawaii held Samuel Armstrong in high esteem based on his work at Hampton and how he also becomes “the architect of native Hawaiians education” after his return in 1880. Like his father, Samuel Armstrong was influential in education there, too.

nourishing 'poi,' to me the most satisfying food in the world, or their fish cooked on hot stones underground... and [then] a good lomi-lomi all around.”⁶¹

Robert Engs who has written extensively on General Armstrong and the city of Hampton, finds that Armstrong's journeys with his father were not just for fun and adventure but along with his siblings, he had to follow the same work ethic as the Hawaiian youth. For,

Richard Armstrong firmly believed that his children should know how to do things as well as acquire book knowledge. He apprenticed Sam to a local carpenter. Practicing his new skill, the younger Armstrong built a house in back of the family's for their Chinese manservant.⁶²

In addition to the manual education that Armstrong received he proved to be a very good student, studying Latin, Greek, and the classics. His father, in his capacity as Minister of Public Instruction, founded Lahainalaina Seminary and Hilo Boarding School, incorporating manual training in both institutions. Richard Armstrong also incorporated the principles of manual training at the Royal School in Honolulu which was attended by the children of the native aristocracy and many missionary children, including his son Samuel. Hence, the incorporation of manual labor into the curriculum was not just for the natives but for all of the children on the island.

General Armstrong's principles of education were also formed through his adherence to the pedagogy of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who is credited with the idea of educating the whole person. Pestalozzi's influence in education spread from the elementary school system of Prussia throughout the American educational system. The

⁶¹Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised*, 19.

⁶²Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited*, 19.

superintendent of schools in Oswego, New York, Dr. Edward A. Sheldon, imported materials developed in England and Canada which used Pestalozzi's approach. In 1861, he established the Normal School at Oswego to prepare teachers in the application of Pestalozzi's method. It became the center of Pestalozzi education in the United States.⁶³

Born in Zurich, Switzerland on January 12, 1746, Pestalozzi based part of his philosophy on the work of Rousseau. The "Pestalozzi Method" proposed that "children should learn through activity and through things. They should be free to pursue their own interests and draw their own conclusions."⁶⁴ Armstrong modeled his "Head, Hand and Heart" ideal for Hampton on Pestalozzi's quest for balance in education, which included these three aspects. During General Armstrong's tenure at Hampton, he also introduced the Pestalozzi method to the Butler School when they formed a kindergarten class there.

Armstrong attended Panahou School for his formal education. Panahou was a college preparatory academy begun by the missionaries for their children. He also spent two years at O'ahu College. After the untimely death of his father, Armstrong left Hawaii reluctantly in 1860 to attend Williams College in Massachusetts, where he completed his degree in 1862. At Williams, Samuel Armstrong became friends with the president, Mark Hopson, who had introduced the concept of manual training as an appropriate means for educating the whole person at that college. Other manual programs had been started throughout the United States including at Harvard - but none

⁶³ Pestalozzi World-educating children for a better world.
<http://www.ipestalozziworld.co/pestalozzi/pestalozzi3html>.

⁶⁴ More information on Johann H. Pestalozzi can be found in Darling 1994: 18 quoted in Johann H. Pestalozzi and informal education, Mark K. Smith, updated April 11, 2008; Beyer: 2007; Melvin L. Barlow: 1967, 106-7, Charles A. Bennett: 1926; Charles H. Ham: 1896.

specifically for African Americans or for a group of people who had lived a life working and using their hands for someone else's benefit.

Armstrong's interaction with the native Hawaiians helped him to relate to the African Americans he later commanded in a humanitarian and very paternal way. Armstrong went on to serve in the Civil War, first as Major of the 125th New York Volunteer Infantry, then as Lieutenant Colonel of the 9th United States Colored Troops, and finally as Colonel and commander of the 9th United States Colored Troops. He was brevetted Brigadier General, US Volunteers on March 13, 1865 for "meritorious services." After his military stint, Armstrong was hired as the Sub-Assistant Commissioner for the Ninth (later re-designated Fifth) Sub-District Virginia of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands on March 3, 1866, and sent to Hampton Roads.⁶⁵

The varied experiences that Armstrong brought with him to the Virginia Peninsula make for an interesting history: one which contributed to "Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute's preeminence in black education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." ⁶⁶This history is the topic of many scholarly research ventures. Because of Armstrong's personality and ideals, "the significance of Hampton Institute as a model for other educational institutions is a subject of continuing, and often heated,

⁶⁵ For more information on General Samuel Chapman Armstrong's early years at Hampton see Mary Frances Armstrong and Helen Ludlow, *Hampton and its Students*, (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1874); Robert Engs, *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980) and Francis Greenwood Peabody, *Education for Life: The Story of Hampton Institute*, (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1919) as well as a number of other sources.

⁶⁶ Hoda Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute: The Legacy of Alonzo G. Moron*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 1.

debate.”⁶⁷ With the substantive archival materials on Armstrong including the Armstrong papers, letters to his mother, siblings and friends, and articles found in *The Southern Workman*, a monthly journal that was established by Hampton in 1872, there is much to review. The *Southern Workman*’s mission was “to give the American public full and reliable accounts of industrial and educational matters of the South, especially among the freedmen.”⁶⁸

Even though Hampton is nationally and internationally known, HodaZaki states that its “importance and impact have yet to be charted in their totality.” She suggests that a full analysis would include its use as a model for many of the one hundred plus schools established for blacks after the Civil War, especially Tuskegee Institute. Hampton’s influence also extended to Native Americans, for Hampton was educating Native Americans ten years after its establishment.⁶⁹ In 1878 Hampton began a pioneering program in American Indian education which lasted until 1923. Its early history of diversity continues to be important both in the past and today.

A very controversial figure, General Armstrong has been called everything from a hero to a racist. Be that as it may, he is viewed by many as one of the major supporters for a program that would promote the personal and social uplift of the newly freed population of African Americans who had undergone years of enslavement. In developing the Trade program, General Armstrong showed his commitment to the dignity of manual training which he believed, when taught scientifically, would produce the most

⁶⁷Hoda M. Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute: The Legacy of Alonzo G. Moron*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 1.

⁶⁸ William A. Aery, Report, Publication Secretary, Hampton Institute, Section One, “Present Day Work” 35, from a Trade School Box, Hampton University Archives.

⁶⁹Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute*, 7.

skilled and capable man possible. His work impacted the individual as well as the community within and beyond the gate of Hampton:

General Armstrong used to tell us that the destiny of our race was in our own hands. Hampton's aim was to inspire us with high purpose, useful skills, and sufficient knowledge so that every graduate might carry the idea of self-help to his community.⁷⁰

Armstrong's twenty-five years of service to Hampton between 1868 and 1893 was marked by an "... innovative curriculum, combining manual training with teacher training, [which] made it an object of study by educators." Promoting his ideal, Armstrong even established a printing press on campus to spread the Hampton message across the nation. Hoda Zaki further explains how, "Hampton's influence was to spread beyond the boundaries of the United States, as European and U.S. educators and colonialists applied Hampton's example to schools and colleges established in Africa and Europe."⁷¹



Figure 3, Early photograph of HNAI, 1868. Hampton University Museum.

⁷⁰ Walker, *The HoneyPod Tree*, 37.

⁷¹ Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute*, 7.

The school, though humble, began as a master plan in the mind of young Samuel Armstrong. He wanted his school to be different from what the American Missionary Association (AMA) was planning for the peninsula. Armstrong identified the site and began to share the idea of manual labor versus academic or (classical training) with the authorities. The AMA already knew the importance of starting a normal school but did not fully invest in Armstrong's dream:

But no teachers of another race could do for the freed people what was waiting to be done by men and women of their own blood. In 1866, the American Missionary Association determined upon the opening of a normal school, and in January, 1867, there appeared in the American Missionary Magazine an article by General S. C. Armstrong, earnestly and ably setting forth the need of normal schools for colored people, wherein they could be trained as teachers, and fitted to take up the work of civilizing their expectant brethren; and this article was followed later in the year by reports from various well-qualified employees of the American Missionary Association as to the feasibility of this scheme.⁷²

Despite the hesitation of the administrators, and after more negotiations, Armstrong was able to convince the AMA that he was the right person to lead the new school which opened in 1868.

In the spring of 1867, after long dialogue, Dr. E. Wood and his wife sold the land, "Woods Farm" to George Whipple of the American Missionary Society. This land, located on the Hampton River, was a former plantation known as "Little Scotland." Although he was its designated leader, initially Armstrong was not allowed to run the school exactly as he had planned. The first teachers at Hampton were provided by the AMA and the school was not yet officially under his sole jurisdiction. There was

⁷² Armstrong and Ludlow, *Hampton and Its Students*, p. 21.

hesitation on the part of the AMA because Armstrong was interested in establishing a school different from those already established by them. He wanted to incorporate the “Head, Hand, Heart” philosophy that he was exposed to in Hawaii, so there was reluctance to let him go it alone. Although he could not have his way completely, Armstrong was extremely pleased that he was finally selected to serve as the first principal of the school and these words reflected how he felt when he officially signed on to this new endeavor: “Till then my future had been blind; it had been only clear that there was a work to be done for the ex-slave and how and where to do it.” Much to Armstrong’s satisfaction, in 1870, “Hampton was granted a liberal charter by the State of Virginia, becoming independent of any association or sect and of the government.”⁷³ Armstrong was finally able to hire the teachers that he wanted so that he could develop the curriculum as he wished.

Armstrong brought to the task “not only a desire to help the freedmen, but also effective executive ability, and confidence in what he was doing ... also a diplomacy and tact that enabled him to gain the good will of the local whites.”⁷⁴ The dual role he played did not always endear him to all of the local African Americans in the community. Many felt that his accommodationist attitude along with his patronizing ways were not always beneficial to them. No one can really explain Armstrong’s motives or his personality but perhaps his status as a former military man who was used to following as well as giving orders may have influenced his decisions. In this case, following the directives of his superiors often meant that he appeased the whites in Hampton.

⁷³ Armstrong and Ludlow, *Hampton and Its Students*, 14.

⁷⁴ Robert Engs, *Freedom’s First Generation*, 113.

Robert Engs argues that “unlike C. B. Wilder, Samuel Armstrong was a true army man; he obeyed orders.” Engs further states that, “being a man of considerable political acumen, he did not always tell missionaries and freedmen the exact nature of tasks assigned to him, but he executed them successfully and, at the same time, maintained the good will of his superiors, the missionaries, and of Hampton’s white hierarchy, though not always of its black one.”⁷⁵ This dual personality contributes to the difficulties in understanding Armstrong, because his actions and words did not always correspond. He was also very religious and this part of his personality also added to the confusion. However, it is clear that his passion to educate black men and women was always consistent. Armstrong wrote in an early report to the bureau:

The education of the freedmen is the great work of the day; it is their only hope, the only power that can lift them as a people, and I think every encouragement should be given to schools established for their benefit.”⁷⁶

Armstrong wrote in his first Annual Report that there was no question that co-education of the sexes was important. Armstrong believed:

Our school is a little world; the life is genuine; the circle of influence is complete. The system varies industry and cheapens the cost of living. If the condition of woman is the true gauge of civilization, how should we be working, except indirectly, for a real elevation of society by training young men alone? The freed woman is where slavery left her. Her average state is one of pitiable destitution of whatever should adorn and elevate her sex. In every respect the opportunities of the sexes should be equal, and two years of experience have shown that you men and young women of color may be educated together to the greatest mutual advantage, and without detriment to a high moral standard.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Robert Engs, *Freedom’s First Generation*, 113.

⁷⁶ William Robinson, “The History of Hampton Institute, 1868-1949” (PhD Diss., New York University, 1953), 64.

⁷⁷ Peabody, *Education for Life*, 51-52.

A natural fundraiser, Armstrong wrote letters to his friends up north urging them to “aid in establishing schools and obtaining teachers for the freedmen.” His request also explicitly solicited for a higher purpose: “there is another and most important field for philanthropic effort. It is the building of industrial schools. I consider this work of great importance, but it is almost neglected.”⁷⁸ So, the Normal School that the AMA wanted to establish in Hampton came to fruition. It would incorporate manual training, Armstrong’s dream, within the curriculum.

The early curriculum emphasized a Normal School program for teacher training. It was Armstrong’s desire to train teachers who would then return to their communities to teach others. On April 1, 1868, Armstrong began his program with fifteen students, two teachers, little money and few buildings. Prior to the students’ arrival on April 1, Armstrong had some of the land farmed to provide food for the students and to provide an opportunity for jobs for the students. He knew that he was working with a population of students who had no additional resources to attend school let alone to pay for an education. By April 26, there were “thirty pupils in the school doing manual labor work in the morning and studying in the afternoons and evenings.”⁷⁹ In 1871, the first class of graduates (five young women and fourteen young men) gave Armstrong the satisfaction in knowing that he had moved along the right course. It is interesting to note that one of the graduates had served under Armstrong in the war. Trustee Francis Greenwood Peabody recounts that:

One young woman and six young men continued their education in Northern colleges or at Howard and Lincoln Universities: two worked their way through Oberlin College as carpenters; one was appointed

⁷⁸Robinson, “The History of Hampton Institute”, 63.

⁷⁹Robinson, “The History of Hampton Institute,”, 67.

teacher on a United States training ship; one became a respected lawyer, and one a printer. All at one time or another were teachers, and of the thousands they taught hundreds more became teachers.⁸⁰

In keeping with Armstrong's goals for Hampton's graduates, the majority returned to teach in their respective communities.

The Normal School curriculum followed Armstrong's goals to train blacks to be teachers:

Teacher Education Curriculum

The first announcement of the school prescribed as conditions for admission:

Sound health; good character; age not less than fourteen years or over twenty-five; ability to read well and write intelligibly; knowledge of arithmetic through long division; intention to become a teacher. Those desiring admissions should apply in their own handwriting, stating previous occupation how long and where they have attended school, and how far they can comply with the above terms of admission and giving references as to character.⁸¹

William Robinson elaborated on the curriculum of Hampton in his 1958 dissertation. He declares, "Thus, from the very beginning, the curriculum of Hampton Institute was aimed chiefly at the preparation of teachers. The emphasis reflected the purpose for Hampton which its founder had set forth when the school first opened." In Armstrong's first report, he had emphasized this point: "At Hampton...we are trying to solve the problems of an education best suited to the needs of the poorer classes of the south, by sending out to them teachers."⁸² Of course, Armstrong's Hampton was not the only institution with the Normal School system: "while southern black secondary education occasionally occurred in what were called high schools in the early years of

⁸⁰ Peabody, *Education for Life*, 112.

⁸¹ Robinson, "The History of Hampton Institute," 139.

⁸² Annual Report of the Principal, 1869, Document, Trade School Box, Hampton University Archives. p. 5

freedom, far more of it occurred in other institutional forms. One common form involved teacher training in “normal classes” within a graded school, a practice not uncommon in the North.”⁸³

Despite Hampton’s initial emphasis upon teacher education, the first Hampton Institute catalog made no mention of the subject. The following curriculum was the only one listed in the 1870-1871 catalogs, and no explanation was given as to what was actually taught:

Junior Class

Mathematics: Arithmetic from long division to percentage
Language: Spelling, reading, English grammar, sentence making
Natural Science: Geography with map drawing, natural history.⁸⁴

In their study, “Secondary Education and Emancipation: Secondary Schools for Freed Slaves in the American South, 1862-1875,” Ronald E. Butchard and Amy F. Roller compare the curriculum for normal schools and manual training programs at other black institutions showing that some were similar in to Hampton and yet more sophisticated in other ways :

The Penn School’s normal curriculum included physical and political geography, US history, philosophy and natural philosophy. Hampton’s three-year normal program included the study of rhetoric, chemistry, soil analysis, composition and bookkeeping. When the Atlanta Normal School, soon to become Clark University, opened in 1868, it announced that its program of study “embraces Model Schools, Teachers’ Institutes, Lectures on the Theory and Drill in Practice of Teaching.” Fisk University’s normal department required the study of composition, elementary algebra, geometry, botany, chemistry, physiology, natural science, natural philosophy, history of the United States and “daily study

⁸³ Ronald E. Butchart and Amy F. Roller, “Secondary Education and Emancipation,” 4.

⁸⁴ Robinson, “History of Hampton Institute,” 240.

of the science of education and art of teaching.” By contrast, the Normal Department at Howard University devoted only one year out of three to educational theory or practice, focusing the remainder of the curriculum on “English grammar and literature, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, history, geography, and natural and moral science.”⁸⁵

Armstrong’s program progressed over his twenty-five years. A great number of courses and buildings were added, including the Huntington Industrial Works building. The Trade School had become more and more important to the operation of Hampton as indicated by this February 11, 1890, report signed by James H. Brinson and H. S. Thompson (instructors in the Trade School). This letter shows the professional status of the trade school that even had its own letterhead: *The Huntington Industrial Works of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute*. S. C. Armstrong was listed as the principal and F. N. Gilman as the treasurer. The next line read “Manufacturers of all Kinds of Yellow Pine Lumber, Doors, Sashes, Etc.” The report states that The Hampton Industrial Works opened in August 1878 and that its name changed after Mr. C. P. Huntington made liberal donations. The report continues with financial updates on loans and the general business of the Industry.⁸⁶

The post at Hampton, a school that he designed based on his experiences in Hawaii and at Williams College, proved rewarding for Armstrong. He viewed the establishment of Hampton as part of his mission or his destiny. Shortly before Armstrong’s death in 1893, *The Southern Workman* reported in the August 1891 issue that here were 407 Negro students, 134 Indian students, and 101 members of other races for a combined total of 641. A photograph was taken captioned, “Hampton’s Girdle Around the World” which showed the diverse student body with students from as close as

⁸⁵Buchart and Roller, “Secondary Education and Emancipation,” 6.

⁸⁶James H. Brinson and H. S. Thompson, “Trade School Report, 1890,” Trade School Box, Hampton University Archives.

Virginia and as far away as Armenia. Armstrong asked that his funeral be kept simple and that he be buried on the campus with the students. He also asked that a plain stone mark his grave. Along with these personal admonitions, Armstrong wanted to insure “that there will be enough friends to see that the work of the school shall continue.”⁸⁷

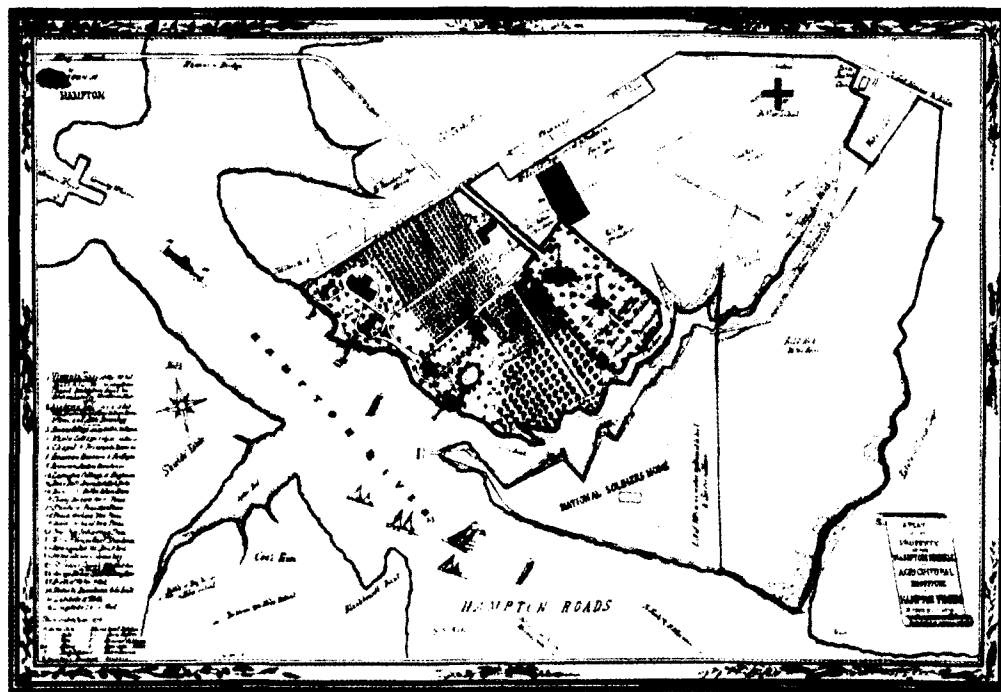


Figure 4. A Plan of the HNAI at Hampton, VA, c. 1876. Hampton University Archives

Hollis B. Frissell: "The Hand, Head and Heart," 1893-1917

⁸⁷Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Helen W. Ludlow, *Ideas on Education for Life* (Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1936), 15.

What these fundamental and germinated ideas of Hampton are is well known. The making of men and women rather than polished scholars;" "Character building through self-help," "a classroom education whose end is straight thinking," "industrial training that makes the school a drill ground for practical life works but puts the student into direct relation with that work, thus becoming the great moral force it ought to be; "anonsectarian Christian civilization of the widest range, to help make good citizens" and to "send out not pedagogues but those whose culture shall be upon the whole circle of living, and who work clear insight and strong purpose will do - quiet work that shall make the land purer and better."⁸⁸

Hollis Burke Frissell was HNAI's second principal. When Armstrong died, Frissell took over without knowing that his relationship with HNAI, which began in 1881, would last for the next thirty years. With a background in many ways different from that of General Armstrong, he was born on July 14, 1851 in South Armenia, New York. Frissell's father was a Presbyterian minister. Not as wealthy as the Armstrongs, Frissell paid his way through Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. He stayed a year and then went on to Yale University in 1869. Francis Peabody recounts in the history of the establishment of Hampton that Hollis B. Frissell "also earned his living by the Catholic use of his fresh tenor voice in the choir of a Jewish tabernacle on Saturday and of a Baptist church on Sunday."⁸⁹ This mix of religions was unusual for the 1860s, but the account shows that Frissell had a very good singing voice that aided him in paying his way through college. Of somewhat fragile health, he graduated later than his classmates due to a case of typhoid fever. He completed his studies at Yale in 1874. Frissell entered

⁸⁸*The Southern Workman and Hampton School Record*, November 1896.

⁸⁹Peabody, *Education for Life*, 231.

Union Theological Seminary in 1876.⁹⁰ Interested in missionary work, Frissell initially came to Hampton to observe the practices of General Armstrong.

He had heard much about Hampton and its work in the community among African Americans while he was studying to become a minister and a missionary. When Frissell was seeking advice from the AMA about the education of blacks, he received the recommendation that Hampton was the best place to go. General Armstrong met the young missionary and magnanimously took Frissell on a personal tour of the campus. Liking what he saw, General Armstrong invited Frissell to serve as the guest minister at the Chapel Service. Although Frissell did not preach his best sermon, General Armstrong asked Frissell to serve as the new chaplain for the Institute. However, Armstrong had no idea that Frissell would make the impact that he did. Writing in June 30, 1881, Armstrong stated, “the school is very fortunate in securing the services of Reverend H. B. Frissell.”⁹¹

Frissell agreed to stay at Hampton for only one year; yet he was still on hand thirteen years later to ascend to the position of principal, which he was destined to hold for almost a quarter century.⁹² Frissell, along with Robert Russa Moton, had taken on greater responsibility during General Armstrong’s illness. Robert Moton, a Hampton Institute student from 1885 to 1889 (90 – took a year off to work), worked at Hampton after graduating as the commandant of Cadets for over 26 years. Later he replaced Booker T. Washington as the principal of Tuskegee Institute.

⁹⁰ Charles D. Walters, “Projections, Projects, and Finance: The Letters of Hollis Burke Frissell,” in *Stony the Road: Essays from the Hampton Institute Archives*, ed. Keith L. Schall and Roy D. Hudson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977), 56.

⁹¹ Robinson, “History of Hampton Institute,” 107; Peabody, *Education for Life*, 236-237.

⁹² Robinson, “History of Hampton Institute,” 111.

Under Principal Frissell's guidance Hampton expanded the Industrial Education or Trade program. Continuing Armstrong's legacy was a difficult task. Not only did he have to fill the shoes of a much respected educator and fundraiser but he also had to meet new financial challenges. When Armstrong died much of the support he had garnered from his parents' missionary associates and his connections to Williams College also became increasingly difficult to access. As Frissell lacked Armstrong's connections to donors, he handled the challenges in several different ways, including changing the academic program, increasing the size of the student body, expanding the physical plant, and promoting the service of the students and instructors to the community and the nation.

As part of these initiatives, one of Frissell's major changes to the curriculum was professionalizing the trades. This meant that after 1896, the manual training program at Hampton was no longer for character building alone but also a means of financial support for the institution as a whole. Thus, instead of the "*Head, Hand and Heart*," Frissell changed the emphasis of the curriculum to "*Hand, Head, and Heart*." Frissell restructured coursework towards the ideals of an industry which would help to sustain the school and provide students' tuition. When Frissell's new direction proved successful, he was given the apt nickname, "the Builder."

Through these changes Principal Frissell gained a reputation as an innovator in curriculum development. He also developed a knack for writing fund-raising letters. For example, "by 1898 Principal Frissell had developed seven form letters that he sent out to long lists of people throughout the world." One of the selling points in his letters was how he explained the necessity of Hampton:

You have doubtless heard of Hampton Institute and its work for the Indians and negroes. This school founded by General Armstrong soon after the close of the war, has always upheld industrial education as the surest means of fitting these people for useful citizenship. The success of Hampton methods is best shown by the work that is being done by her graduates, most notable among whom is Booker T. Washington, Principal of Tuskegee School in Alabama.

Unable with their present training to compete with white mechanics, the blacks are being pushed out from shops both north and south, and as freemen are losing their hold on the trades they practiced in slavery. If this is to be prevented, members of their own race must be trained as industrial leaders and teachers who shall open shops of their own, build decent homes, cultivate the land properly.

From its farms and sixteen shops, Hampton has already sent out many such leaders, but more and better trained mechanics are necessary. To promote this end, the Slater Fund Board of Trustees has promised \$6,000 a year for at least five years, with a probably increase afterwards, towards carrying on a trade school at Hampton. Mr. Morris K. Jessup of New York has contributed \$10,000 for a building to be known as the Armstrong and Slater Memorial Trade School Building, and other friends have increased the sum to \$26,000. The work of erection is far advanced, but in order to complete the building and prepare it for class work, \$14,000 more is needed.

We should be very glad to have you help in this enterprise, which we believe deserving of your support, and which we trust will promote the best interest, not only of the Indian and negro race, but also of our country. Bishop Potter of New York, in speaking of Hampton has said, "There are philanthropies of which one may be excused for being in doubt, but this is not one of them."⁹³

As seen in this letter, like his predecessor, Frissell did not stress "classical" education because he viewed manual training as a more important ingredient in students' gaining self-sufficiency:

We do not at all disparage classical education at Hampton, for we know its value, and believe that a certain number of the youth of the colored race should receive a classical education; but the great question before the race at the time is how they are to obtain decent homes, how are they to clothe themselves, and how are they to obtain sufficient property so that they

⁹³Walters, "Projections, Projects, and Finance," 54.

shall be able to hold their own with members of the white race. Our aim now is to send out into the country districts of the south, young people who shall not only be teachers in the schools, but also those can cultivate the land, start shops, and present an object lesson to their people of industrious, decent Christian living.

He further stated,

I do not feel that the colored man because of his color ought to be shut out from Latin and Greek. But the average colored man, like the average white man, needs many other things more than Caesar's Commentaries.⁹⁴

Frissell is also noted for the various methods he used to spread Hampton's message. The belief in Hampton's ideals "to stress industrial rather than liberal arts education and educating blacks and improving the position of blacks in American thought and life" was paramount to Frissell. Frissell "frequently repeated his belief that "the creation of a right public spirit among white people..." toward blacks and their education was "as important...if not more important..." than the actual education of blacks." So, from 1912 – 1917, right before Frissell's death, he utilized silent films as a part of "its orchestrated persuasive campaign efforts." Along with the campaigns that focused on letter writing and films, Frissell promoted Hampton through other means such as those indicated in a 1915 report:

The campaign of the past winter with songs, addresses, and moving pictures which extended through New York, New England, and Pennsylvania was one of the most successful in the school's history. While these campaigns have much more than covered expenses...the school would not feel justified in spending so large a percentage of its funds for current expenses in the mere raising of money. But, when it is realized that Hampton is creating or strengthening with its northern campaigns a belief in the possibilities of related races and at the same time presenting to thousands of discouraged men and women a solution for race problems, the expenditure seems more than justified. It is also to be remembered that Hampton thus created interest not for itself along, but for

⁹⁴Walters, "Projections, Projects, and Finance," 58.

the whole Negro race and that every other Negro school is helped by the pioneer work which Hampton performs.⁹⁵

Hollis Frissell was very creative in raising funds for the school because it was becoming increasingly more important for him to move the school forward toward industry.

Another reason that Frissell moved toward more industry and away from General Armstrong's character building model was his fear that blacks would lose the trade skills they learned in slavery because white craftsmen were refusing to teach black apprentices.⁹⁶

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more and more European immigrants were coming to the United States with the result that African Americans were being displaced from both skilled and unskilled positions. Frissell's fear of displacement made sense during this period. Historian Ronald Takaki, author of, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* and *Strangers from a Different Shore*, has written extensively on immigrants and their impact on society. Takaki finds "that between 1815 and 1920, five and a half million Irish emigrated to America."⁹⁷ These Irish and other immigrants were now in direct competition for the positions that the Hampton graduates were seeking as they returned to their communities:

As they competed against blacks for employment, many Irish immigrants promoted their whiteness. "In a country of the whites were [white workers] find it difficult to earn subsistence," they asked, "what right has the Negro either to preference or to equality, or to admission?" The Irish

⁹⁵ Nickieann Fleener, "The Creation of a right Public Spirit": The Hampton Institute's Pioneering Use of Sponsored Films, 1912-1917." *American Journalism*, vo. 21, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 1 -3.

⁹⁶ Wilma King Hunter, "Coming of Age: Hollis B. Frissell and the Emergence of Hampton Institute, 1893-1917," (PhD diss. Indiana University, 1982)39-40.

⁹⁷ Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 140.

were insisting on what historian David Roediger perceptively termed “their own whiteness and on white supremacy.”⁹⁸

Although the reasons had changed, clearly Hampton students still faced inequities and obstacles similar to those that they experienced during Reconstruction and the years of Armstrong’s leadership. So, with the changing times in American society, Frissell sought to make Hampton’s graduates ready to meet their competition:

During this economic boom: where blacks were being drawn into the factories and mills of the “New South.” Although they were systematically excluded from certain industries such as textiles and continued to be employed primarily in agriculture, blacks became an important source of industrial labor. In 1890, 6 percent of the total black work force was employed in manufacturing, compared with 19 percent of the total native white work force. Between 1890 and 1910, the number of black male workers in nonagricultural occupations increased by two-thirds, or to 400,000, due mainly to the expansion in sawmills, coal mining, and railroad construction. In 1880, 41 percent of Birmingham’s industrial workers were black; thirty years later, blacks made up 39 percent of all steelworkers in the South.⁹⁹

While Frissell read the climate of the times accurately, he also shared the goal of many other white presidents of black colleges to keep blacks in the South where, in their view, graduates could do the most good as role models. While this view was consistent with the presidents’ missionary outlook, it also constrained individual graduates to live under the increasingly strong regime of legalized segregation, white supremacy, and lynching that earned this period the label “the Nadir” in the chronology of African American history.¹⁰⁰ Principal Frissell’s decision to industrialize Hampton’s curriculum was also based on trends that were reflected outside of the campus in a larger arena. Henry Gannett,

⁹⁸Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 135.

⁹⁹Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 135-36.

¹⁰⁰*The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, “The Tradition of White Presidents at Black Colleges,” No. 16, (Summer 1997), 93-99.

geologist for the United States Geological Survey wrote in 1895 a book entitled

“Occupations of the Negroes,” based on the 1890 census:

The statistics of occupations used in this paper are from the Census of 1890, and represent the status of the race on June 1 of that year. The Census takes cognizance only of “gainful” occupations, excluding from its lists housewives, school children, men of leisure, etc. Its schedules deal only with wage-earners, those directly engaged in earning their living.

As indicated in the general statistics,

in 1890, out of a population of 62,622,250, 22,753,884 persons, or 34.6 per cent, were engaged in gainful occupations. Of the negroes, including all of mixed negro blood, numbering 7,470,040, 3,073,123 or 41.1 per cent were engaged in gainful occupations. ... This total population, however, was composed of several diverse elements, including, besides the negroes themselves, the foreign born (of which a large proportion were adult males), and the native whites.

The following table presents the proportions of each of these elements which were engaged in gainful occupations. The 1890 Census Representing the Occupational Status

Based on Race below was included in the study:

PROPORTION	PERCENTAGE
Total Population	34.6
Whites	35.5
Native whites	31.6
Foreign born	55.2
Negroes	41.1

The census results used by Gannett categorized the major occupations in five areas: professions, agriculture, trade and transportation, manufacturers and personal service. In his final analysis of all of the respective data, Gannett states that:

It is seen that in the matter of occupations the negro is mainly engaged either in agriculture or personal service. He has, in a generation, made little progress in manufactures, transportation, or trade. In these two groups of occupations, males are in greater proportion engaged in agriculture and females in domestic service. They have, however, during this generation, made good progress toward acquiring property, especially in the form of homes and farms, and, in just so far as they have acquired possession of real estate, it is safe to say that they have become more valuable as citizens. The outlook for them is favorable as agriculturalists, but there is little prospect that the race will become an important factor in manufactures, transportation, or commerce.¹⁰¹

Frissell, caught in the crossroads of change, incorporated more trades that would prepare the Hampton student to take his/her place in an ever-changing society.

Frissell's Trade School Curriculum

Frissell initially followed Armstrong's curriculum and philosophy (Hands, Head and Heart) where the trade students were expected, as they had before, to enter the Normal School after completing their three-or four-year course in the shops and the night school. Dr. Frissell slowly began to see that changes were needed in order for the institution to survive and for Armstrong's dream to continue. In 1895, the first trade certificates were awarded. Principal Frissell reflected in an interview in 1915 with by William Anthony Aery (a teacher at Hampton during the Armstrong and Frissell years) that "in order that the trade-teaching might be more thoroughly organized it was felt, after

¹⁰¹ Henry Gannett, "Occupations of the Negroes: From Slavery to Freedom," *The African American Pamphlet Collection, 1822-1909*, Rare and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress. memory.loc.gov/ammem/aapchtml/aapchome.html. Chart found on page 5. This pamphlet was originally published by the John F. Slater Fund. The Slater fund was established by industrialist John F. Slater in 1882 to help educate Blacks in the South. p. 16.

General Armstrong's death that a Trade School was a necessary addition to the school's equipment. A one-story building was erected at Hampton in 1896, making provision for technical instruction in nine trades, the practical work in the various trades being still carried on at that time in separate shops."¹⁰²

Frissell's success in moving more towards a vocational education curriculum and sending out industrially educated graduates was realized on November 18 and 19, 1897, when the Armstrong-Slater Memorial School officially opened. The guest list included several Euro-American philanthropists including representatives from the Slater Fund who donated the money for "scientific and technical" training of the trades. Other dignitaries included Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Robert Ogden and Booker T. Washington.¹⁰³ Frissell's work established Hampton as the top industrial school and as a model for others. As Dr. Wilma King Hunter illustrates in her dissertation "until 1896, Frissell made changes in the basic Armstrong plan but they were minuscule compared to the administrative change that came after the John F. Slater Fund... Trade education became more important than production."¹⁰⁴ William Aery contended that "Frissell's goals included sending them into the shops to obtain the knowledge of practical work which will be necessary to prepare them thoroughly to be trade instructors, foremen, and leaders in industry."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰²William Anthony Aery, Manuscript. "Period of Dr. Hollis B. Frissell." Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

¹⁰³ 1896 Anniversary Program, Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

¹⁰⁴ Wilma King Hunter, "Coming of Age: Hollis B. Frissell," 50-51.

¹⁰⁵ Aery, Manuscript. "Period of Dr. Hollis B. Frissell," 4.



Figure 5, Hollis B. Frissell, Second Principal of HNAI. Hampton University Museum.

Frissell's innovative curriculum helped to ensure that students would not only go back into their communities to teach in the fields they had studied, but also that the curriculum would prepare them for the industrialization of America:

An increasing demand for skilled labor throughout the Southern States encouraged the commercial estimate of all such training, and the wages which might be earned by a graduate of Hampton in bricklaying or housework seemed to many observers the justification of a trade-school or department of home-economics.¹⁰⁶

By 1895, the vocational emphasis of the trade school resulted in the proposal "that six months of technical training should precede entrance to the several shops."¹⁰⁷ William Aery assessed the difference between General Armstrong and Principal Frissell's approach to industrial training:

In 1894, according to the school catalogue, the Industrial work at Hampton was divided into three classes: (1) Technical work, the purpose of which was "to open the minds of the students in as many directions as

¹⁰⁶Peabody, *Education for Life*, 246.

¹⁰⁷*Southern Workman*, Vol. LIII, No. 1, January 1924.

possible” and “to give a varied and reasonable degree of skill in the use of different kinds of tools,” including instruction in housework and in domestic training: (2) regular trade work, the purpose of which was primarily the education of the student and secondarily the support of the student, including, for girls, three-year courses in tailoring, shirtmaking, and dressmaking,” and, for boys, three-year courses in “agriculture, blacksmithing, carpentry, harnessmaking, painting, printing, planning-machine work, shoemaking, tailoring, and wheelwrighting”; and (3) those industries which, although of educational value, “including “housework, laundry work, sewing and mending, machine knitting, tinning, steam sawing, and farming.”¹⁰⁸

Frissell’s changes were significant to the operation of the school, how the students felt about their education, and how Hampton students were regarded outside of the campus. Throughout the years, Hampton courses became more advanced and students began completing three-year programs and could spend an additional year studying more comprehensive materials in the Normal School. These courses were termed “graduate or post graduate.” “Such a move in 1897 served two purposes. First, it solved a practical problem experienced in the academic/normal program which required students to complete a three year course of study and one year of student teaching before receiving a teacher certificate.”¹⁰⁹ However, things that *did not* change became an increasing problem for the student body as well as for the white administrators and board members.

The training the students now received in the trade school graduated a skilled group of workers who could teach or open businesses. Along with the trades and vocations, students were enrolled in business courses. In 1898, business courses were expanded to become a business department, the forerunner of today’s School of Business.

¹⁰⁸ Aery, Manuscript, “Period of Dr. Hollis B. Frissell,” 4.

¹⁰⁹ Wilma King Hunter, “Coming of Age: Hollis B. Frissell,” 72.

By 1903, all the regular courses were placed on a four-year secondary basis and academic subjects formed an integral part of every industrial course.

Table 1

1902-3 Trade School Report on Student Enrollment

School Year:	1898-9	1902-3
Tailors	15	33
Carpenters	31	41
Blacksmiths	16	21
Machinists	14	7
Harness Makers	3	2
Shoe Makers	3	6
Wheelwrights	17	14
Painters and Upholsterers	5	10
Bricklayers	13	18
Steam-Engineers	1	19

Source: *The Southern Workman*, CXI, No. 12, December 1902.

The chart above shows that there was a gain in nearly every one of the trades after Frissell became the principal. Cabinet-making is not mentioned in this chart; however, the painters and upholsterers showed a significant increase from 1898-9 to 1902-3.¹¹⁰

William Aery's history of the Trade School summarizes changes in the curriculum for both male and female students:

¹¹⁰*The Southern Workman*, December 1902, CXI, No. 12

In the school catalogue of 1896-1897 there were published detailed descriptions of thirteen three-year trade courses—"carpentry and joinery; bricklaying and plastering; machine work; blacksmithing; wheelwrighting; painting; cabinetwork ...and a two year course in mechanical drawing. A three-grade course in dressmaking was also outlined."¹¹¹

Aery has demonstrated how the attendance requirements improved:

The correlation of Trade-School work and academic studies was also thoroughly worked out and carried into everyday school practice at Hampton Institute. Doctor Frissell said in 1903: "A student in carpentry is given, in addition to a thorough course in that subject, some knowledge of painting, tinning, and bricklaying, so that he is fitted to build a house, when necessary, without the aid of other mechanics. ...The problems in arithmetic are taken from the shops and the farm..."¹¹²

The work of Hampton's students was so industrious between 1908 and 1910, that "without any cessation of regular trade work, the Hampton students themselves added a second story to the Trade-School building, which increased its floor space from 26,000 square feet to nearly twice that amount."¹¹³

In many ways Principal Frissell's views were current with trends in the late 19th and early 20th century on industrial/vocational education. Schools throughout the nation "struggled to meet the labor force needs consistent with the shift from an agrarian to an industrial economic base."¹¹⁴ Patrick N. Foster, a professor of vocational education writes, "economic, educational, and societal issues have repeatedly exerted influence on the definition of vocational education, as well as on how, when, where, and to whom it

¹¹¹ Aery, Manuscript, "Period of Dr. Hollis B. Frissell," 5.

¹¹² Aery, Manuscript, "Period of Dr. Hollis B. Frissell," 9.

¹¹³ Aery, Manuscript, "Period of Dr. Hollis B. Frissell," 10.

¹¹⁴ Gayle Encyclopedia of Education: History of Vocational and Technical Education.
www.answers.com/topic/history-of-voc-and-tech.ed

was provided.¹¹⁵ Hampton's manual program evolved through the years-- Normal, Industrial and Agricultural, Trade, Vocational Education—but not without conflict. A part of the conflict with Hampton's program as well as other HBCU's that like Tuskegeethatwere modeledon Hampton, was the perception of manual training. Frank K. Rogers, director of the manual training program, prepared an article for the *Southern Workman* entitled, "Manual Training Problems," to clarify the difference between manual labor and manual training. He admitted that there were some similarities, but the crucial difference was in the fact that manual training introduced principles and techniques "from the various trades, not for the sake of handicraft," whereas trade training offered thorough instructions in principles and techniques where the student "acquires a skill as a source of livelihood."¹¹⁶

Teaching of the trades or manual education and vocational education was not limited to Hampton and HBCUs. Subscriptions to journals used by Trade School students and still housed in the Hampton University Library include the *Manual Training Magazine*, beginning with vol. 1, 1901 through Vol. 23, 1922, which indicates a very long subscription history. The journal was edited by Charles A. Bennett, with the first volume dating to 1899-1900. Published quarterly by The University of Chicago Press, the themes included in the articles ranged from the psychology of teaching the manual arts to all of the updated methods in the various trades. The first volume in October 1899 contained an article written by Frank A. Hill, Litt.D., Secretary of the Massachusetts

¹¹⁵ Foster, Patrick N. "Lessons from History: Industrial Arts/Technology Education as a Case." *Journal of Career and Technical Education*. Vol. 13, No. 2, (Sp. 1997)

¹¹⁶ Frank K. Rodgers, "Manual Training Problems," *The Southern Workman*, vol. xxix, no. 9, (June 1900) p. 344 – 351. Rodgers article as well as others in this volume discusses how to use Manual training with the younger students or students who will remain in rural areas versus the student who will return to the cities and need more skills. Thus trade training is more appropriate.

Board of Education. He discussed a gift from Frederick H. Rindge to the city of Cambridge for an elaborate manual training school. This school was established for the boys of the English High School and it is interesting to note that the shop and drawing classes were private and the academic courses were public, making this curriculum something sought after for the privileged. The Mechanic Arts High School of Boston was also mentioned. Manual education and later the push towards vocational education were prominent throughout the country during this period and Hampton was providing literature on this trend for their faculty as well as their students as the standards for incoming students also increased.

Manual Training vs. Classical Training

Scholars and activists have questioned the Hampton model with its emphasis on the manual training curriculum and the claim that such education was essential to the educational and social advancement of Hampton's students and Negro students as a group. Many see this type of education as another form of slavery.¹¹⁷ They question the validity of manual education as propounded by Booker T. Washington versus the classical model which W. E. B. Du Bois promoted. Washington, Robert Moton and others who were protégées of Samuel Chapman Armstrong saw manual education in terms of a philosophy that espoused working with one's hands. Developing skills that prepared students for work would enable them to secure their place in the community and to own property, which in turn would allow blacks to exert more economic and social power.

¹¹⁷ Spivey, Donald. *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978),

Booker T. Washington's views promoted manual training as a strategy of blacks' self-help, directing their own destiny, uplifting themselves, and establishing black institutions like Tuskegee. As did Armstrong, Washington and other proponents for manual education had little respect for what he called "mere book education." He wanted his students to study "actual things," to acquire a practical education. For blacks, industrial training would be the path to economic independence and racial equality."¹¹⁸ A classical or liberal arts education as advocated by W. E. B. Du Bois, Alexander Crummell and a host of other intellectuals before him, emphasized intellectual growth through such subjects as: "algebra, geometry, higher mathematics, Greek, Latin, and Science."¹¹⁹

Washington and Du Bois shared the ideal of the uplift of blacks, though their views on how to achieve this differed. Initially, the struggle between them was respectful. However, it escalated to levels that were perhaps unnecessarily heated. According to historian and sociologist, E. Franklin Frazier:

On the surface ... each proponent excluded the type of education advocated by the other. But as a matter of fact Washington stated that he "would not confine the race to industrial life, not even agriculture" although he believed that industrial education would inculcate habits of thrift, a love of work, and encourage homeownership and that industrial education would provide a secret foundation for professional education and public positions of responsibility. Du Bois on his part readily admitted that "all men cannot go to college but" he maintained, "some men must." Moreover, he would not deny "the paramount necessity for teaching the Negro to work, and to work steadily and skillfully."¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 138.

¹¹⁹ Gregory Mixon, "Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine: Black Leadership in the Nineteenth Century. *The Journal of Negro History*, vol 79, Issue 4, (Autumn, 1994), 363.

¹²⁰ E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1957), 459.

Unfortunately, though rooted in the debate between manual vs. classical education, their differences may have become more profound because of their individual pride and the larger struggle about who was to become the new black leader after the death of Frederick Douglass:

African American leadership, according to historian Vincent P. Franklin, has, at times, been closely aligned with the African American masses. At other instances that leadership lacked consistency. By 1899, African Americans were in a state of transition from an entire generation that had known slavery as well as freedom to a people seeking the boundaries of full citizenship in the United States. The vision of the earlier generation, after freedom was obtained in 1865, was to build a free-thinking African American society within the social, economic, and political structures of the United States.¹²¹

At one point, Washington and Du Bois worked together towards the uplift of African Americans and really admired each other's work. Du Bois had even dined at Booker T. Washington's home in Tuskegee and applied for a position to teach there. However, when Booker T. offered Du Bois a teaching position at Tuskegee, Du Bois turned it down and eventually their relationship began to deteriorate.

Frazier's analysis of the debate between Washington and Du Bois notes that their arguments were often similar though presented differently and therefore the later rift was more about the curriculum than about defining who would be the leader of the Negro race.¹²²

¹²¹ Franklin, *The Negro in the United States*. 363.

¹²² Frazier, Mixon, Takaki as well as other scholars have shown that the power struggle was over who was to become the next leader of the African American masses after the death of Frederick Douglass. A new publication, Mabel O. Wilson's, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012) includes insight into Bishop Turner and his role in race leadership placing him among the ranks of other black intelligentsia including Alexander Crummell, Henry O. Tanner, as well as several African American women.

Frazier's assertion that the curriculum for African American uplift was an important factor in determining Douglass's successor is also illustrated by the case of Henry McNeil Turner. A grassroots preacher, Turner "served the African American lower class and gave them a voice through his ministry, religious and political organizing, vision, and support for emigration."¹²³ Historian Gregory Mixon has written extensively about Turner, who challenged Washington's role as leader of the masses as well as his philosophy of education even before Du Bois. "Turner represented the antebellum and Reconstruction ministerial leadership that experienced slavery and had limited access to education."¹²⁴ He "did not believe White America was committed to teaching and developing African Americans as members of the civilized world." After visiting Hampton Institute in 1878, Turner "chastised Hampton for denying African American students access to intellectual development." More in line with DuBois than Washington, Turner "believed intellectual growth for African Americans was achieved when they studied such liberal arts subjects as: "algebra, geometry, higher mathematics, Greek, Latin, and Science. Hampton Institute's focus on industrial education, in Turner's estimation, trained African Americans for racial subordination."¹²⁵ However, Washington became the leader most accepted by the white establishment, particularly after his Atlanta Compromise speech. In the eyes of the Black Intellectual community, which includes Turner, this speech also placed Washington in the role of accommodationist, for:

From 1868 to 1893, when General Armstrong died, the Hampton Idea was embraced by these men as the solution to the status of African Americans. James Anderson asserted that ex-slave and Hampton Institute graduate Booker T. Washington "breathed new life into the Hampton Idea

¹²³Mixon, "Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine," 363.

¹²⁴Mixon, "Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine," 364.

¹²⁵Mixon, "Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine," 366.

and accounted...for its fame and achievements during the early twentieth century.” With his 1895 speech before the International Cotton Exposition in Atlanta, Washington presented his credentials as the new advocate of Hampton Institute’s educational model for African Americans. As a result of his acceptance by these leaders of the white communities, Booker T. Washington became the chosen leader of the African American community.¹²⁶

And as Mixon continues:

The 1895 speech, “set in motion the ideological struggle between the industrial philanthropists and the black intelligentsia.” The two opposing forces with different agendas for African Americans would fight over determining “the social purpose of training Afro-American leaders and teachers.” Whichever group was victorious could claim the right to direct and mold the role African American masses would have in the South and nation. By 1899, it was clear that both the Northern philanthropists and Washington had not converted African American educators and leaders to the tenets of Hampton-Tuskegee. For example, African American minister Alexander Crummell was adamantly opposed to limiting African Americans to industrial education. He proposed that African Americans be given access to liberal arts education also. The masses, it appears, wanted a combination of industrial and liberal education to create a well rounded person...The turn of the century became a struggle to capture “the black intelligentsia” and control the direction of the African American masses.¹²⁷

Turner differed from Washington and Du Bois because he operated in the manner of a country preacher. Although close to the people in the community, he lost ground, for,

By 1899 Bishop Henry McNeal Turner’s star was setting behind the onrushing presence of Booker T. Washington. W.E.B. Du Bois and others had yet to rise in opposition to accommodation. Bishop Turner’s influence, as scholar Gayraud Wilmore suggested, would not be matched by the “radical churchmen in the Niagara Movement and later...the

¹²⁶Mixon, “Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine,” 367.

¹²⁷James Anderson quoted in Mixon, “Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine,” 367.

NAACP.” These leaders would garner their support from the rising African American middle class, while Turner “had the grassroots.”¹²⁸

Although Turner did not agree with Washington, ironically Washington had the same lower class populace in mind when he founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which was the populace that Hampton also reached out to. However, Nixon situated Washington closer to what we think of Du Bois’s position when he states that “Booker T. Washington provided a different approach to Black Nationalism. Washington served a new class of people. “The Wizard of Tuskegee” sought to train the middle class and elite to teach, guide, and lead the African American masses. He also helped construct an African American society seeking ways to deal with a new question, segregation”¹²⁹

John Hope Franklin noted that the ascendancy of Booker T. Washington provided “the most dramatic and significant episodes in the history of American education and of race relations.” So completely did he dominate the scene, Franklin argued, that he stamped his thirty years of leadership with his own name and personality, for better or worse, justifying the label “The Age of Booker T. Washington.”¹³⁰ During Washington’s ascendancy, Du Bois was also trying to make a name for himself so that Washington’s popularity also fuelled Du Bois’s anger towards him.

The contention that Washington and Du Bois both wanted to uplift African Americans but through different strategies is also supported by Lee Baker’s critique:

Du Bois’s move from the academy enabled him to focus on political activism and agitation. The move was also facilitated by an increasing rift with Washington. Du Bois was not opposed to industrial education and generally agreed with Washington in terms of economic uplift, self help,

¹²⁸ Nixon, “Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine,” 364.

¹²⁹ Nixon, “Henry McNeal Turner versus the Tuskegee Machine,” 363 – 364.

¹³⁰ Denton, Virginia Lantz. *Booker T. Washington and the Adult Education Movement* (Florida: University of Florida Press, 1993), 161.

and self-determination. However, he disagreed with Washington about how to obtain equality. Du Bois held the position that social equality and economic opportunity could be obtained only through gaining political rights.¹³¹

Baker stresses the differences in these two social activists' approaches, particularly Washington's aversion to political gains if the price was alienating his white donors and backers. General Armstrong, Booker T. Washington's mentor, did not stress blacks' participation in politics either. However, scholars are now finding more and more evidence that Washington was not completely against political gain but really was a sort of a politician himself:

Addressing every aspect of adult social problems, Washington's protests bristle from the pages of his papers, ... he protested against discrimination for coffee service denied in Selma, Alabama, the treatment of blacks in prison, separate and unequal education, discriminatory railroad job and peonage practices, lynching, Jim Crow and conditions of railroad travel, voting restrictions, poor health and housing, and political inequities... Choosing his methods and priorities, Washington maintained the stability of his education work through Tuskegee and the spirit of cooperation, while conducting secret maneuvers and court challenges to social injustice, often at great personal and financial risk to himself.¹³²

One of Washington's biographers, August Meier reexamined some of his writing on Booker T and concluded, "It is clear, then, that in spite of his placatory tone and his outward emphasis upon economic development as the solution to the race problem, Washington was surreptitiously engaged in undermining the American race system by a direct attack on disfranchisement and segregation; that in spite of his strictures against

¹³¹ Baker, Lee D. *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (California: University of California Press, 1998), 117.

¹³² Denton, *Booker T. Washington and the Adult Education Movement*, 155.

political activity, he was a powerful politician in his own right.”¹³³ This scholarship supports my efforts to show that the education advocated by General Armstrong and his successors did not brainwash their graduates but made them more self-sufficient and equipped to handle the changing times despite what may have been Armstrong’s personal motives and limitations.

Maturity and Demise, 1918-1950s

The Trade School After Frissell

Guests were taken on tours of inspection to the Whittier Training School, with its five hundred interesting “pickannies”; or to the Trade and Agricultural Schools, where the usual, everyday practical work was going on. They visited classes in sociology and other academic subjects; in typewriting where tests of speed were being given; in house hold chemistry, where silk was being tried for purity ... in home handicrafts, where girls were caning chairs or varnishing furniture, learning to reduce the high cost of living.¹³⁴

Although Principal Frissell had made changes at Hampton, more were obviously necessary as illustrated by this description of a typical tour for prospective donors, the Board of Trustees, and friends of the institution. Fundraising events, such as tours were recounted in *The Southern Workman* to promote Hampton and the manual/vocational training of African Americans. Given that Hampton’s students were young adults and although the students who attended the Whittier School were children, the term “pickannies” was perceived as derogatory even in the 1920s. Because *The Southern Workman* also published sociological studies by African American scholars like Monroe Ware and Du Bois himself, referring to students as “pickiannies” seems all the more

¹³³Denton, *Booker T. Washington and the Adult Education Movement*, 160. For more information on Booker T. Washington, biographers include Robert Norrell, Louis Harlan, Michael B. Boston who look at Booker T. Washington’s strategies as a business man.

¹³⁴*The Southern Workman*, June 1920, p. 258.

shocking.¹³⁵ As late as 1938, the term was still used in a Colonial Williamsburg publication showing two little African American children eating watermelon with Colonial soldier reinactors looking on. Even though the term was used in the Jim Crow South, its usage was symbolic of the concerns about Hampton's objectives as a manual training institution that was behind the times and also paternalistic.

In spite of Hampton's reputation as a good school which allowed students to work for their education during a Work Year Program, the expectations of the student body began to conflict with Hampton's white administrators and board members.¹³⁶ Through the years, even as early as when Armstrong was principal, Hampton's students both black and Indian expressed their idea through student protests appropriate to the situation. Although there was much turmoil and change taking place at HNIA and the world at this time, between the period of 1917 and the 1950s it was also a very special time in the school's history. This period has received less scholarly focus than the Armstrong years. The second principal, Hollis B. Frissell died in 1917 and was also buried in the campus cemetery with General Armstrong. Booker T. Washington, the protégée of General Armstrong and colleague to Frissell had died a few years earlier in 1915, so the main

¹³⁵Pickaninnies derives from "piconino," the Portuguese phrase which means "small children."

¹³⁶The Work Year program initiated by General Armstrong to aid students in paying for school was expanded by Booker T. Washington when returned to Hampton as an employee. He set up a night school so that students could work during the day and still receive the academics that they came to Hampton to achieve. An example of how the Work Year not only benefitted the students but the school is found in Annual Reports as reported by Mr. W. T. Westwood, who was in charge of the saw-mill department where he reports that "over two million feet of North Carolina pine have been cut into building material. Work has been furnished to eighteen regular hands (evening students), and for two days each week to thirteen in the Normal School. The year has been favorable for business, the yard is well stocked with material for the market. One student bids fair to become a good sawyer, another at the matching and planning machine has just taken the place of a skill hired hand. Found in the October 20, 1885. *Report of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, for the year ending June 30, 1885.* Richmond: Rush U. Derr, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1885.

advocates for the inclusion of manual training as part of the educational curriculum for African Americans were gone.

Globally, the United States was experiencing World Wars I and II, the 1929 Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression. Lynching and race riots were still a threat. Blacks were leaving the South and migrating North to seek jobs during the industrialization of America. Additionally, there was a great cultural movement among African Americans, known as The Harlem Renaissance. Many writers, musicians and activists emerged throughout the country during this period, but especially in New York's Harlem district. Locally, Hampton's name changed from Hampton Normal Industrial and Agricultural Institute to Hampton Institute on July 1, 1930 and the term for its governing head changed from principal to president. There were great demands on Hampton to keep up with the changes of the times. Students felt increasingly that the institution moved too slowly in progressing to where African Americans needed to be in the larger society.

Although Hampton's campus was somewhat like a cocoon, the larger society was encroaching on the lifestyle developed by Armstrong and Frissell. The case of St. Clair Drake illustrates this clearly. This noted sociologist and black intellectual, who co-authored *The Black Metropolis* published in 1945, Drake discussed his enrollment at Hampton Institute in 1927 with the anthropologist George Bond. When asked why he chose Hampton, Drake explained that, "the primary appeal of Hampton was its widely

advertised opportunities to “work your way through.”¹³⁷ Not surprising, St. Clair Drake eventually became involved in the strikes at Hampton.

One instructor that Drake encountered, Allison Davis, who had a master’s degree in English from Harvard, was one of a small group of teachers that wanted to “modernize” Hampton. One of Drake’s favorite professors, they became fast friends and Davis ended up leaving Hampton because of his participation in demanding changes. Davis was an anthropologist, writer, researcher, and one of the most promising black educators and intellectuals. Drake’s experience at Hampton and relationship with Davis helped to shape his path. While at Hampton, Drake described witnessing some of the early student strikes “in an attempt to bring black colleges and universities under the control of blacks.” He recalls that:

Within a week or so after I arrived at Hampton, the students called a strike and closed the place down for about a month. Hampton had a system whereby every Sunday night the students all sat downstairs in the big auditorium while the white visitors sat upstairs looking down. The students sang spirituals. The administration was virtually all white except for the people who were in charge of discipline. We were organized on a semi-military order and went to church on Sunday morning. We had regular inspection of our rooms in which one of the officers with a white glove would come on Sunday and make sure that there was no dust. General Armstrong, as a former Civil War general, had laid down the mold. The emphasis was not on the intellectual life but on character building. I stayed four years and became an editor of the school newspaper. I used the newspaper to fight the administration. The commandant of cadets and his assistant and other male disciplinary officers were black. The dean of women, the academic deans and the presidents were white. The number of black teachers outside of the trade

¹³⁷ George Clement Bond, “A Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake: an American anthropologist,” *American Ethnologist*, vol 15, Issue 4, (November 1988), 765, Drake asserts, “I had \$125, which I had earned as a plaster’s apprentice in Staunton during the summer of 1925 and 1926. I then secured waiting tables in the dining room at Hampton and was a biology laboratory assistant for four years. I supplemented this income by keeping the desk at night at Holly Tree Inn, the campus guest house.” Drake would not have been able to afford a college education if not for what was the precursor to Work Study.

school was very small.¹³⁸

Especially important are some of the closing comments that Drake makes during his interview with Bond. It is obvious that he wanted to stress the point about his feeling toward the white teachers:

The feeling I always got from my teachers, the white ones, was that blacks as well as anybody could learn anything. There was no cognitive deficit. There was an inherited deficit, but it had nothing to do with one's ability to think and learn. It had to do with their belief that black people were oversexed and had inborn tendencies toward being lazy. This was why one had to build character. That was why we did not have dancing. .. As I have grown older, I have realized that the Puritan New Englanders felt very much the same way about the whites who were being educated too. But I think it was more intense for blacks. The issue was not that blacks could not learn.¹³⁹

St. Clair Drake went on to graduate from Hampton in 1931 after becoming the editor of the school newspaper. The latter had allowed him to join others in seeking changes which included adding more black professionals to the faculty. Little did he know that when he came to Hampton, because of the Work Year Program and an opportunity to pay for his own education, that his encounter with Allison Davis would lead him to become an advocate for change at Hampton.

Drake is just one example of a student who experienced the student strikes and fought for change. Reuben V. Burrell is another individual who attended and later worked at Hampton and received some of the benefits of the work of Davis and Drake. Born in Washington, D. C., in 1919, Burrell, a "child of the depression," attended Armstrong Technical High School in D. C. where he became interested in photography.

¹³⁸ St. Clair Drake quoted in Bond, "A Portrait of John St. Clair Drake," 765-766.

¹³⁹ St. Clair Drake quoted in Bond, "A Portrait of St. Clair Drake," 766.

He and his sisters were raised by his father because their mother died when he was young. Burrell reflected on how difficult life was for them and how important Hampton Institute was to his survival when he was accepted September 13, 1938:

Yes, well you see the basic reason I came to Hampton, I was interested in getting a degree in industrial arts. Now, that is comprised of the various things electricity, woodwork, sheet metal and all. You might experience fellows starting as early as the sixth grade when they went to shop. That's what I was after and when I came to Hampton I knew that the particular trade that would expose me to a whole lot of those areas was auto mechanics. I had to have electricity, and since I had had auto mechanics in high school, and I was lucky enough to have a trial professor who had just finished Hampton, and he got the idea that I was halfway intelligent, he came to me and wanted to know whether I was going to college. I told him no, I didn't have any money to go to college. So he said, why not apply to Hampton, you can work your way through. Well, I dragged my feet and every time I turned around he was on me and wanted to know whether I had written to Hampton. Eventually I wrote to Hampton and sent a high school transcript.¹⁴⁰



Figure 6, Reuben V. Burrell at the age of nineteen years old at Hampton. Hampton University Archives.

¹⁴⁰ Reuben V. Burrell, Conversation with author, Wednesday, April 1, 2009, 10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Tape Recorder.

Burrell is one of many students who came to Hampton after they were introduced to vocational education during elementary and high school. Influenced by a Hampton graduate to attend, Burrell's case is an example of the success of the practical application of Armstrong's concept of teachers leading students. Burrell completed his course requirements in auto mechanics in 1940 and was sent by Hampton to Hemphill Diesel School in New York. He returned to Hampton and taught as a civilian in a naval program on campus until he was drafted into the Navy. In the service, he learned Aviation Metalsmithing, which was an "all white" trade he was not allowed to practice when he was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. Instead, he worked as a stevedore. Upon his discharge, Burrell resumed his studies at Hampton Institute, and earned a B.S. in Industrial Arts in 1947.

After earning the M.A. in Industrial Arts Education from New York University in 1949, Burrell returned to Hampton to teach and found the Diesel Engines course and some of the other Trade School courses had been dissolved. He was then hired in the part-time position of photographer at Hampton Institute. To make it financially, he worked as a self-employed photographer, taking photographs in schools and communities in Hampton and Newport News. Burrell became Hampton's full-time photographer in the 1960s under President Jerome Holland's administration.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Vanessa Thaxton-Ward, "Hampton's Photographic Collections: An Extraordinary Visual Record," *The International Review of African American Art*, vol. 20, no. 1: 59.

By the time Burrell and his generation came to Hampton some of the demands from the student body, channeled through the work of the board, had started to produce changes. Hampton was reevaluating all of the Trade program's curriculum and was starting to hire more black staff. While reevaluating, Hampton's administration also found that it was important to raise the admissions standards, which were already two years higher in respect of the students age and educational level than schools in the North. Academic subjects were more important than before and Hampton once again became concerned about the character of the individual, not just skills.¹⁴² A student could enter the school in September 1936 and graduate in June 1940 by following this three year Basic Trade Course Curriculum:

English Composition
Industrial Mathematics
Reading and Public Speaking
Personal Hygiene
Applied Mathematics
Elements of Chemistry and Physics
Industrial Sociology
Bookkeeping and Business Law

When students followed this basic curriculum they obtained a diploma (equivalent to High School). To receive the BS degree, the student had to add two additional years and one summer completing an appropriate trade course. Burrell explains the difference between a diploma and a degree obtained from Hampton, noting that:

The diploma for the trades was a three year thing then if you wanted to get a degree in a certain area it would take a year to two years to get that degree. See, some fellows, for instance took carpentry or building

¹⁴²"The Preamble," an article by the Junior Tradesmen in April 1934. *The Southern Workman*, vol. Liii, no. 1: 28.

construction and then they switched on into the engineering after they finished their basic trade.”¹⁴³

Between 1936 and 1940, Building Construction, Industrial Arts, and Trade education was offered to students. The Trade curriculum also included apprenticeship training and productive work, which meant that the work completed by students had a commercial value which was about \$200,000.00. The student pay for the productive work ranged from 15 cents to 35 cents per hour based on the student's experience and grades. Even for 1940, this seems to have been a very low amount paid for the kind of work that was completed. However, in conversations with Hampton graduates from that period, like Reuben Burrell they were very appreciative for the opportunity to work to pay for school and did not seem to have a problem with the pay.

Hampton's curriculum was constantly changing and the school was struggling even though the Navy leased space on the campus during WWII and added some much needed facilities like the new gymnasium. Also the students were experiencing a more bi-racial staff and the teachers were selected on the basis of character, trade experience and educational qualifications. In 1940 there were approximately 106 work year students with 84 boys and 22 girls.

The impact of both World War I and World War II on people of African descent globally and Hampton Institute specifically, was just a small microcosm of the educational and economic stability they sought. America was going through a major depression but on the other hand, Black communities were expanding and there was

¹⁴³ Burrell Conversation, April 1, 2009.

more emphasis on artistic and intellectual advancement. However, although Hampton had made some strides as the changes in society were reflected on Hampton's campus, the students and some alumni suggested that the educational curriculum for the trade school as a whole, including the cabinet-making department, was out of touch. More change was needed and entities outside of the campus joined the call to improve the situation.

Students gained a broader view of what was happening beyond the gates at Hampton by participating in summer boarding work programs, and by working locally in the Newport News Shipyard. Again, students began to question school policies and to develop broader social skills to work in other areas of the country where they were exposed to new ideas.

Although Hampton's administrators and board did not realize it the curriculum which included strong exposure to "cultural activities on campus" aided in creating individuals who would begin to question some of the school's practices. Through the musical arts society and the visitors to campus for cultural programs such as Marion Anderson and Langston Hughes, students were exposed to the world outside of Hampton. The Great Depression, the Great Migration, World War I and World War II along with the increased standards for Hampton's entrance requirements for incoming freshmen developed a different and better prepared student body than was required in 1868. The student's exposure to various types of music genres from the Spirituals that some students later revolted against performing to classical also contributed to the development of the new type of student at Hampton:

One of the pleasant annual events of the year is the Saturday evening program sponsored by the Junior Tradesmen. This occurred on April 18... This year, an innovation, the demonstrations in the Trade School were preceded by a delightful musical program in Ogden Hall... the Trade School men wished to show that they could also enjoy and appreciate the

cultural aspects of their education. The program of old English folk songs, followed by selections from "Iolanthe," and Negro spirituals, given by the Trade Schools Singers, proved to this to be true. The singers, one hundred and five in number, a volunteer chorus from the Trade School classes, have met regularly for some time with Mr. Gerald Wilson.¹⁴⁴

An unpublished manuscript by Nancy McGeereveals the impact of the war on the student body and the faculty: "in addition to the problems of the internal organization Hampton Institute was being affected by defense measures and the developing events of World War II." The pressures of war were making the campus problem "doubly complex and difficult." In the words of Malcolm Shaw MacLean (1940-1943):

It has built up a lot of tensions in the members of the staff and some of the students although the latter are by far the best adjusted to this tough situation. This war tension laid on top of the reorganization that we have been carrying through is too much for a good many of them. We have eliminated from the staff 43 persons so far and shall go much farther in our eliminations by the end of the year. In addition to that, the war is drawing off some. One of our mathematicians who made a hobby of short wave radio is being taken by the Navy for service in the communications field. Miss Charlotte Moton, our most able women's physical education person has been pulled off by Mrs. Roosevelt to build up civilian morale through recreation.¹⁴⁵

Even before WWII, the campus was beginning to show signs of economic distress. Among other factors, the cost of the machinery used in the Trade School was becoming too expensive to maintain. Another factor was "an action of the Constitutional Convention that basically placed a tax on industrial schools that were not the property of the state who were doing work for compensation or manufacturing and selling articles in the community in which such school is located." This new tax was a serious blow to the finances of the school because they depended heavily on the sale of the items made in the trade school. The monetary proceeds helped to support the students and the upkeep of

¹⁴⁴*The Southern Workman*, Vol. LX, No. 6 (June 1931), 286.

¹⁴⁵Nancy McGhee, "History of Hampton Institute," Unpublished Manuscript, 605.

the physical plant. Bowing to pressure, the school authorities thought it wise to stop selling manufactured goods to the community rather than incur the danger of taxation on all the school property.¹⁴⁶

Other factors affected the support of Hampton Institute, both on and off campus. President MacLean responded to the student body's request to look into the composition of the faculty when he began to review the credentials of some of the instructors. Still, although the complaint dated back to when St. Clair Drake was a student, the majority of the staff members were still white. Most black staff members were graduates of the Trade School program and all had been there for a long time. Thus, new black faculty members were clearly not being added. Consequently, "the opposition that MacLean had provoked in the process of raising faculty standards by elimination of nonproductive teachers, created resentment and disaffection on the staff."¹⁴⁷ William Cooper, a graduate of the Trade School wrote a letter to President MacLean about the Trade school and alumni concerns including: 1) that the instructors were not properly trained; 2) Mr. Carter's assistant should be Negro and 3) degrees should be offered for the trade course so more men could be more than journeymen.¹⁴⁸ MacLean had inherited some of these concerns from his predecessor, President Arthur Howe (1930 – 1940):

Administrative Staff as listed in 1941-1942 Catalog

	No.	Percentage
White	14	60
Colored	10	40
	<hr/> 25	<hr/> 100

¹⁴⁶ McGee, Unpublished manuscript on the history of Hampton, 581.

¹⁴⁷ McGee, Unpublished manuscript on the history of Hampton, 581.

¹⁴⁸ William Cooper, Correspondence to President McLean, March 18, 1941.

Teaching Staff as of May 23, 1941, omitting Cooperating Teachers

White	54	55.67 %
Colored	43	44.33%
	<u>97</u>	<u>100.00</u> ¹⁴⁹

At the same time, MacLean's popularity in the community was waning because he insisted on complete equality of treatment for blacks in his social and cultural presence. MacLean was aware that these attitudes would not be popular on the Peninsula, but apparently was prepared to push forward his mission at Hampton Institute until his goals were accomplished.¹⁵⁰

An outside influence on Hampton's need to change its curriculum was promoted by the editor of *The Journal of Negro Education*, Charles H. Thompson. He asserts in his "Editorial Comment in the April 1940 issue, entitled, "The Educational Reorganization of Hampton," that,

1. The period of reorganization provided an opportune time for Hampton to rethink and reorient her whole educational program.
2. The internal organization and administration of Hampton, including its "Gone-with-wind" philosophy of race relations needs seriously to be overhauled. It smacks of the United States policy prior to the World War: "Negroes make good soldiers provided they are led by white officers."
3. The administrative situation as now obtains at Hampton (1940) with its properunderlying philosophy constitutes an unfit environment for the proper education of Negro youth.¹⁵¹

Hampton was just one Historically Black College that was undergoing this metamorphosis and dealing with the problem of white administrators. The article, *White Presidents at Black Colleges*, discusses how the majority of the HBCU's still had white

¹⁴⁹ McGee, Unpublished manuscript on the history of Hampton, 566.

¹⁵⁰ McGee, Unpublished manuscript on the history of Hampton, 631.

¹⁵¹ McGee, Unpublished manuscript on the history of Hampton, 569.

presidents and completely white boards, except for the few that began with black founders. Interestingly enough, “many of the black colleges that held out the longest before appointing a black president were the most academically prestigious and well-funded institutions. Fisk University appointed its first black president in 1946, Hampton in 1949 with President Moron, Spellman in 1953, Xavier in 1968, and lastly Paine College located in Augusta, Georgia in 1971.”¹⁵²

Hampton’s First Black President

Finally, Hampton began to look at hiring a black president. Raphael O’Hara Lanier, a black native of North Carolina served as Acting President at Hampton Institute while maintaining his position as the Dean of Faculty from 1943 – 1944. A committee that included Board members, and a special committee that included some black faculty members like Eva C. Mitchell, a prominent professor in the School of Education, was formed to address the vacancy and find a new president. McGee found that “certainly in the investigations and reports that arose when the presidency became vacant, one of the major points of discussion throughout the world of Negro education was the possibility of a Negro as President.”¹⁵³ The discussion about hiring a black president extended to the staffing at the school as well: “Dean Lanier addressed the problem of balancing the numbers of white and Negro workers and his efforts to level the ratio of Negroes to white.” “Instead of 50-50, a former aim, the ratio of Negro to white at the time of this meeting was 64 to 36. Miss Mitchell pointed out the need to equalize salaries of Negro and white employees.” After much discussion, “the consensus of opinions stressed that

¹⁵² *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, “The Tradition of White Presidents at Black Colleges,” No. 16, (Summer 1997), 93-99.

¹⁵³ McGee, unpublished Manuscript on the History of Hampton, 569.

the selection should be made on attributes and characteristics other than race.”

Therefore, Dean Ralph P. Bridgman was elected president of Hampton Institute (1944 - 1948). Bridgman’s tenure as president was brief as he “resigned after a struggle in which the faculty voted no confidence in his leadership.”¹⁵⁴

Alonzo G. Moron was appointed the president in 1949, as the first black to hold this position full-time. Moron, a 1938 Trade School graduate from the U.S. Virgin Islands, was very active in the political arena fighting for better schools and equal rights. Before serving as president, Moron had returned to Hampton to serve “as an alumnus on a committee established to investigate the business management of the college.” After Bridgman’s resignation, Moron’s educational background reflected Hampton’s dual legacy:

Moron’s diploma in upholstery identified him with the industrial arts and vocational education history of the school, while his undergraduate and graduate training must have made him appealing to those who identified with Hampton’s teaching-training educational mission... His work experience in managing a large housing project and budgets, including Hampton Institute’s marked him as one who could introduce sound business principals to the college... Last, he was articulate, personable, and committed to the institution.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴McGee, unpublished manuscript on the history of Hampton, 639. Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute*, 15 and 33.

¹⁵⁵Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute*, 15.



Figure 7, Left, Alonzo G. Moron, Hampton's first Black president during a commencement exercise. Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1950s.

Moron and the end of the Furniture Trades

The late 1940s and 1950s at Hampton saw yet another change in the educational philosophy which affected the Furniture Trades. This change in the philosophy along with financial concerns resulted in the demise of the Trade School. As opportunities for African Americans grew educationally and more professional positions became available, the interest in learning trades decreased. Additionally, HBCU's were struggling with "the need to keep down operational expenses in response to the added pressures on private institutions because of Brown and other school desegregation cases." Moron felt the same as he remarked in *The Journal of Negro Education*, "There has never been enough money available for the private colleges to do the job." The private college, therefore,

“must be selective in what it proposed to do,” both in terms of physical and departmental expansion.”¹⁵⁶ As a result, Moron made the unpopular decision to phase out the Trade programs in 1953.

Moron acted on the recommendations of studies analyzing the Trade School. Several studies had been completed prior to Moron serving as president. Of course, Principal Frissell had reevaluated Hampton after Armstrong’s death and made changes; but based on the student strikes and the pressure from the outside, the school again began to reevaluate again and changed many of its policies. A letter written in 1920 from Robert Moton, president of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, advises,

As I see it, I should grant the certificate after the four years of advanced and give the diploma only after two more years of advanced work in the trades or allied subjects, such as Mechanical or Architectural Drawing, Mathematics, General Science, and perhaps Sociology and History, with a course in Education offered to those who wish to enter the teaching profession, and also more practice in advanced trade work.”¹⁵⁷

As it became more and more expensive to run the trade school program Hampton became more focused on a liberal arts education. In addition, Moron’s own personal beliefs about the Trades and where African Americans should be politically and educationally influenced his decision as well. As HodaZaki contended, “Moron was very actively lecturing and writing to promote his ideas about race relations and education.”¹⁵⁸ *The Times Herald*, the local evening paper, publicized President Moron’s reorganization of the Trade School:

¹⁵⁶ Tina Poole, “Black College Presidents After Brown,” (Masters Thesis, University of Virginia, May 2005), 13.

¹⁵⁷ Robert Moton, Correspondence, Letter to Dr. James E. Gregg. April 22, 1920. Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

¹⁵⁸ Hoda Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute*, 46.

It is Hampton Institute's job as a college, not so much to emphasize the training of tradesmen as to prepare vocationally trained people-people with degrees and with status in the eyes of the liberal-arts trained educators-to introduce and to direct trades training programs over the Nation."

That statement by President Alonso G. Moron made not long ago before a group of visiting officers of Virginia and Maryland teachers, associations provides a key to the thinking behind the reorganization of Hampton Institute's Division of Trades and Industries, to be known from now on the "Department of Technology."

The Hampton president points to two trends or factors which added impetus to the decision to offer only degree courses in the Department of Technology: first, the fact that better secondary vocational schools are being developed and that these high schools will need teachers; and second, that a relatively small proportion of Hampton Institute's graduates in trades have actually been practicing them. Many of them go into teaching anyhow.¹⁵⁹

The article concluded that, "selectivity in choosing the student body will be given greater emphasis under the new program. The student body will be slightly smaller, as well the staff."¹⁶⁰

The shift of emphasis that led to more changes at Hampton is also documented in the 1952 speech of J. Lawrence Duncan, race relations specialist for the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency. He declares that, "The pattern of job opportunities for Negroes has undergone and is still undergoing a radical and tremendous change." Duncan also said, "It has become clearly evident that the demand for well-trained engineers, technicians, and other skilled workers has begun to outrun the supply of qualified Negro applicants."¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹*The Times Herald*, Newport News. "Moron's Plans for Trade School, Thursday, May 4, 1950. Trade School Box, Hampton University Archives.

¹⁶⁰ *The Times Herald*, Newport News. "Moron's Plans for Trade School, Thursday, May 4, 1950. Trade School Box, Hampton University Archives.

¹⁶¹*The Hampton Bulletin: Department of Technology Issue*, vol. XLVII, No. 5 (February, 1951).

One of the first programs that Moron eliminated was the Agricultural Department. He also eliminated the Diesel Engine courses that Reuben Burrell was to teach when he returned from graduate school. In response to the rapid movement within the program, it was very important for Hampton to explain the need for the changes because many alumni did not agree with them. *The Hampton Bulletin*, a newsletter published by The Trade School was to serve a purpose similar to *The Southern Workman*. It was used to propagate information on the new program:

Hampton's Present Program

Hampton Institute is a college of industrial and agricultural technology, of applied arts and sciences, and of teacher education, for students with demonstrated aptitudes and recognized qualities of character and leadership. The curriculum of study is organized within seven instructional divisions: Agriculture, Business, Education, General Studies, Home Economics, Nurse education, and Trades and Industries. During 1946-47, the enrollment is 1542 in the first semester, and 1623 in the second. A few more than 500 are enrolled each semester in the Division of Trades and Industries, of which about 30 per cent are candidates for degrees.

The purpose of the Division of Trades and Industries is to train young men to secure employment (1) as skilled craftsmen, (2) as foremen and technicians in industry, (3) as teachers of trade education and industrial arts and (4) as construction engineers and architects. To accomplish this purpose all departments of the Division provide basic training supplemented by job experience.

Further to assure the attainment of these ends, the Division at the beginning of 1946-47 was reorganized into three major departments—Trades Training, Teacher Training, and Engineering and Architecture.

An Office of Guidance and Coordination is also being established this year. Its function is to locate students in field internships and apprenticeships, to help them secure permanent employment in industry on the level of their highest competences, and to bring up-to-date information from industry to the staff of the Division.

Three types of curricula are now included in the offerings of the Division: Trades Training, Teacher Training, and Technical Training. The

trades training provides three-year courses leading to diplomas in Automotive and Diesel Mechanics, Bricklaying and Plastering, Carpentry, Electricity, Forging and Welding, Furniture Trades (Cabinet-making and Upholstering), Machine Shop Practice, Painting and decorating, Plumbing and Heating, Printing, Sheet Metal and Roofing, and Tailoring and Dry Cleaning.

The teacher training curricula provide courses to satisfy requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Industrial Arts Education, and in Trade Education (Vocational Industrial Education). Training in a trade curriculum is a prerequisite to the teacher training curricula.

The technical curricula provide courses to satisfy requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Building Construction, Architectural Design, and Architectural Engineering. Training in a building trade is a prerequisite to the curriculum in building construction.

To supplement the specialized courses taken in the Division of Trades and Industries, students are required to take courses in English, mathematics, natural science, and social science from other divisions of the college.

Note: Young women may apply for admission to the following trades: printing, tailoring, dry cleaning, and upholstery.¹⁶²

The focus of Hampton Institute developed through the years and continues today, witnessed by changes in the curriculum to fit the times and still propagated through printed documents circulated on the campus and throughout the community.

¹⁶²The Hampton Bullentin: Department of Technology Issue, vol. XLVII, No. 5 (February, 1951)

Chapter 3

Material Representation

Furniture Trades: Cabinet-making and Upholstery

Historically, within the city of Hampton there was a larger population of free blacks than in outlying areas: “in 1860 there were 201 free blacks and 2,417 slaves in Elizabeth City County [Hampton].”¹⁶³ Many of these free blacks were artisans. As we have seen from the cases of Thomas Day and his counterparts in New Orleans, some were very successful cabinetmakers. Many of them shared one other thing in common – they were mulattoes. In *Freedom’s First Generation*, Robert Engs explains that:

Hampton’s blacks enjoyed two advantages: they lived in a county where labor intensive crops like tobacco no longer predominated, and they frequently had white relatives in the county. The latter advantage was particularly characteristic of the town’s free black population. ...Most of them were mulattoes, and many of them shared family names with the whites responsible for their complexion.¹⁶⁴

Several free blacks in Hampton engaged in bricklaying, blacksmithing, and other trades. Although cabinet-making was not listed, there were probably cabinetmakers in the area. Margo Moscou found in her research on cabinetmakers from New Orleans that “Barjon, Glapion, Dolliole and Campanel were very prominent names within the free black artisan community.” However, Moscou also discussed changes in the status of the free blacks :

For New Orleans’ free people of color, they no longer had their privileged status, as the three-tiered caste system to which they

¹⁶³Engs, *Freedom’s First Generation*, 10.

¹⁶⁴Engs, *Freedom’s First Generation*, 10 – 11.

once belonged collapsed into two-- white and black. Competition for jobs and the progression of hostilities towards all blacks profoundly affected their lives. Post-war reconstruction was just as life altering for free people of color as it was for planters and slaves. The society that previously supported a furniture trade that free-black cabinetmakers once thrived on was dramatically altered after the Civil War. For the most part, these cabinetmakers would be lost to the past.¹⁶⁵

In the city of Hampton, the status of the free people of color was also altered by the war, but many of them remained leaders within the community. The news that Fort Monroe was a sanctuary for freedom expanded the population of Hampton which changed the lives of both the enslaved and free people of color.

As we have seen, HNIA served a very important role in exposing the newly- freed African Americans - - many of whom were destitute-- to learning the necessities for living a better life. General Armstrong taught the students to make use of materials available to create functional and utilitarian objects for their everyday needs. As the school's programs progressed and Principal Frissell placed greater emphasis on the trades as source of funding, students began to produce more refined pieces of furniture to sell. Principal Frissell took the cabinet-making department to another level. This not only altered furniture production from unpolished to refined but gave the makers an elevated status once again. This time however, the status was not just open to mulattos and free people of color but to all who completed the program at Hampton.

The Armstrong Years: 1868 - 1893

¹⁶⁵Engs, *Freedom's First Generation*, 10 – 11.

When Hampton Normal School opened its doors in 1868 the campus consisted merely of the old dilapidated Mansion House built in 1828 after the property was no longer a plantation:

The corps of teachers was necessarily enlarged, and a "Home" furnished for them in one of the houses purchased with the farm, while a long line of deserted barracks and a second building, formerly used as a grist-mill, were taken for girls' dormitories--these, with the necessary barns and workshops, all standing in convenient neighborhood to each other, close down upon the shore, completing the present list of school-buildings.¹⁶⁶

General Armstrong's Hampton thus utilized structures refurbished or recycled from the Civil War. Tents, old army barracks, and buildings for animals and crop processing were converted to start the school until Armstrong began his aggressive fundraising campaign. In a way, these old, worn materials left over from the war, represented the new students coming into Hampton. They were like people cast out of an older way of life and seeking ways to become whole citizens in a nation that had utilized their skills and labor for so long without offering them compensation.

Armstrong saw large impressive buildings designed by leading architects as a way to shore up the confidence of these newly-freed blacks, a population that felt downtrodden and looked to Hampton as a symbol of hope. He borrowed a successful fundraising tactic from the school that became Fisk University. It was founded in 1866 in Nashville, Tennessee. George L. White, the treasurer, organized a group of students known as the Fisk Jubilee Singers. They raised money to help build Fisk.¹⁶⁷ The idea for raising finances for both Fisk and Hampton served a two-fold purpose:

¹⁶⁶ Armstrong and Ludlow, *Hampton and Its Students*, 21.

¹⁶⁷ Benjamin Brawley, *The Negro Genius: A New Appraisal of the Achievement of the Negro in Literature and the Fine Arts* (New York: Vantage Press, 1974), 130.

Fisk's success "spurred many of the black schools to cultivate black singing." Not only was this a way for black schools like Hampton and Fisk to raise money but the performance of these songs added respect to African American culture. Alain Locke noted, by "spread{ing} the knowledge of these songs far and wide in their concert campaigns, the schools saved the older forms of black music permanently by recording and publishing."¹⁶⁸

General Armstrong utilized all types of methods to raise funds for Hampton and he realized that the success of the Jubilee Singers was one model to follow.

The Hampton Singers represented Hampton throughout the nation and "Sang Up" the money to build Virginia Hall. This Hall was designed by noted architect Richard Morris Hunt and completed in 1874. Students and local men worked together to erect the structure and Armstrong paid the students the same as he paid the white men from the community. Virginia Hall was a multi-purpose building housing women students, female faculty, the dining hall, print shop, laundry and other industrial rooms as well as a chapel that seated 400 people for the daily services. The woodwork in this building was completed by student labor. Armstrong's reasoning for having students perform the labor was also two-fold: building character while also saving money.

Academic Hall built in 1869 is where Booker T. Washington, who attended Hampton from 1872 to 1875, passed his entrance exam. By the time that Washington arrived on campus, the Academic Hall was finished so there were not as many students living in the old army barracks. His description of his admission exam for Hampton provides a better understanding of the materials around him:

After some hours had passed, the head teacher said to me: "The adjoining

¹⁶⁸ Jon Cruz, *Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and the Rise of American Cultural Interpretation* (Boston: Princeton University Press, 1999),168.

Recitation-room needs sweeping. Take the broom and sweep it.”... I swept the recitation-room three times. Then I got a dusting-cloth and I dusted it four times. All the woodwork around the walls, every bench, table, and desk... Besides every piece of furniture had been moved...¹⁶⁹

The classroom that Washington had to clean seems not very ornate, but very sturdy and functional:

Coming now to their Academic Hall, we find the two hundred and thirteen young men and woman gathered in a large and handsome assembly room well lighted, and furnished as comfortably with desks and blackboards as any Northern school-room.¹⁷⁰

At this point in the history of the school, the students were not only responsible for constructing the buildings but also for making furniture for them. The students worked from models like the mid-Victorian desk in *figure 8*. Mrs. Emmeline (Emma) Dean Walker Armstrong, the first wife of General Armstrong used this desk. This two-piece desk is well crafted, sturdy and elegant.

¹⁶⁹ Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery, An Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc.), 17-18.

¹⁷⁰ Thelma Robins Brown, “Memorial Chapel: The Culmination of the Development of the Campus of Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia, 1867-1887” (Master Thesis, University of Virginia, 1971), 134.



Figure 8, Mrs. Emma Walker Armstrong's Desk, Hampton University Museum Collection.

As money was raised for Hampton, more pieces of furniture were purchased:

Cake's job included putting in shelves, clothes hooks, locks and latches...a letter from a Hampton teacher of November 180 suggests the buildings were completed or near completion by November. It stated that General Marshall, the school's treasurer, "has brought in Boston all the furniture and fixtures for the new school building."¹⁷¹

Charles D. Cake was hired by General Armstrong to supervise the building of the First Academic Hall. This Academic Hall was destroyed by fire in 1879 and replaced with the Academy Building in 1881. Also designed by Richard Morris Hunt, the building served as a classroom facility.

¹⁷¹Brown, "Memorial Chapel," 130.

In keeping with Armstrong's idea of building large and impressive buildings to uplift the races, more dormitories and buildings were funded, and more student labor was used to furnish them. The *Industries* as they were called during Armstrong's years included carpentry both for the boys and girls. Skills such as mattress making, weaving straw seats, and construction of basic tables and desks were taught to the students. During the Armstrong years, 1868-1893, the majority of the furniture the students made was utilitarian. Armstrong's philosophy of the "Head, Hand, and Heart" was the primary focus in the Industries.

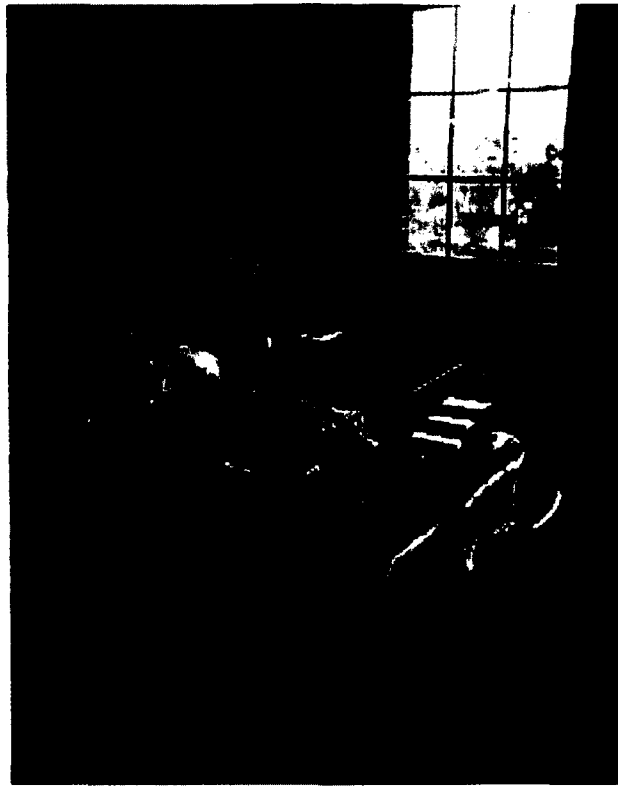


Figure 9, Early photograph of HNAI dormitory. Note the rod iron bed post very simply made as well as the simple desk and chair. Hampton University Archives.

As documented in the *Hampton Normal & Agricultural Institute Catalogue of 1876*, furniture repair is listed under the Engineer Department and Shops, which was managed by J. B. H. Goff. Goff worked at Hampton for eleven years. The description states:

The students were “under the general direction of the engineer. In these shops agricultural machinery and steam heating apparatus are repaired, and damaged articles, such as broken chairs, benches and bedsteads, are made good. Serviceable and durable iron bedsteads and washstands are manufactured of gas pipe; wooden tables and other plain furniture is made for students’ rooms.”¹⁷²

General Armstrong facilitated a similar education for female students. The young ladies learned how to make or repair items such as stools, cornhusk mattresses and chairs because these skills would be useful in the homes to which the majority of the ladies were groomed to return as homemakers and mothers:

The girl’s Technical Carpentry Class under Miss Park, numbers 40 this year, 20 Colored and 20 Indian girls. They are taught the use of common tools, acquiring the ability to make and repair articles of comfort, and use in their homes and school rooms. They are shown how it is covered and used as a piece of furniture as well as a receptacle¹⁷³

Native American students who attended Hampton also enrolled in classes that taught furniture- making or repair for the instructional guideline directs that, “bedsteads, wardrobes, tables, and washstands will be made by the Indian boys at their workshop.”¹⁷⁴

A classic photograph in the Hampton University Archives illustrates the inclusion of Indians in the same programs as their African American colleagues. Booker T.

Washington served as the house father to American Indian students when he returned to Hampton in 1879 by invitation of General Armstrong. Washington was the first African American hired on the campus. “[T]he following summer, Booker T. Washington

¹⁷² *1876 Catalogue*, (Hampton, VA, Normal School Steam Press, 1876), 47-48.

¹⁷³ *The Southern Workman and Hampton School Record*, vol. xxii. No. 1 (January 1893), 44.

¹⁷⁴ *The Southern Workman*, vol. 13 (March 1884), 29. Members of over 65 different tribes of Native Americans attended Hampton from 1878 – 1920; but their experiences will not be discussed extensively because they are not the focus of this study. See *To Lead and to Serve: American Indian Education at Hampton Institute, 1878-1923* by Mary Lou Hultgren and Paulette Fairbanks Molin for a nice summary on the history of the Indian program at Hampton. For another point of view, see Donal Lindsay, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923*.

accepted Armstrong's job offer "to be a sort of 'house father' to the Indian young men."

¹⁷⁵ Washington also created the Work Year program.



Figure 10, Indian students-mattress making at HNAI. Frances Benjamin Johnston. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs.

Another early student, Thomas Calhoun Walker, came to Hampton from Gloucester, Virginia, in September 1880, seven years after Washington. Walker recalled his first days at Hampton in his autobiography, *The Honey Pod Tree*:

The present Institute of commodious dormitories and modern conveniences did not then exist. We were sent to Marquand Cottage to spend the night, but before going to bed it was necessary for each of us to go to the barn and fill his mattress-case with wheat straw. Two pallets, one primitive oil lamp made of tin on a small stand, and two chairs comprised the furnishings of our room-- a poorly furnished room in the light of present-day standards perhaps, but no other room has ever seemed

¹⁷⁵ Mary Lou Hultgren and Paulette Fairbanks Molin, *To Lead and to Serve: American Indian Education at Hampton Institute, 1878-1923* (Charlottesville: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy in cooperation with Hampton University, 1989), 19.

to me so complete and satisfying. It represented the initial part of a cherished dream come true.¹⁷⁶

This description of the early dormitories at Hampton shows that men coming from very poor environments were pleased to have access to furnishings which today would be unimaginable to students entering college.

During Armstrong's years exposure to furniture making was rudimentary. He was interested in building the campus and building the character of his students. Students learned to repair items left over from the Civil War for their own use and to stuff mattresses with straw so that they could have beds. Between 1868 and 1893 when Armstrong died the furniture gradually became more sophisticated. A prime example is illustrated in a report written by Hampton instructor, J. H. McDowell, and published on October 20, 1885 by Rush U. Derr, Superintendent of Public Printing in Richmond:

Carpenter Shop: Twelve Indians and four colored apprentices are employed. Indians on half time, colored on full time, studying evenings. A journeyman instructor has been hired. All are paid according to the value of their labor. Work has been done as follows: thirty-four wardrobes for the new girl's building; thirty settees (each to hold five students), for study room in basement of same; twenty-four settees and twelve writing desks for Academic Hall. General repair of the buildings and school furniture, making fences, etc.¹⁷⁷

The report further illustrates how women also taught or encouraged woodworking among the student body:

A "Carving School" was opened October 1, in charge of Miss Kate Baker, in which one colored boy has been steadily employed; an average of five work an hour and a half a day, two being Indians; twenty-five have taken

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Calhoun Walker, *The Honey Pod Tree: The Life of Thomas Calhoun Walker* (New York: The John Day Company, 1958, 24 – 25.

¹⁷⁷ *Annual Report* (1885), 10. Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

lessons and practiced more or less steadily... Book-shelves, book-racks, crickets, bread-boards, picture-frames, paper-folders, alms plates, etc., have been made and sold fairly well.¹⁷⁸

Thus, Hampton's campus was fairly self-sufficient and productive. All the necessities for building the structures and the making of furniture were there:

Mr. W. T. Westood, in charge of the saw-mill department, reports that over two million feet of North Carolina pine have been cut into building material. ...The year has been favorable for business, the yard is well stocked with material for the market. One student bids fair to become a good sawyer, another at the matching and planning machine has just taken the place of a skill hired hand. ... Mr. James A. Brinson, in charge of wood-working machinery, reports his employees thirteen students, working the entire time, and five from the Normal school, working two days each week, with these three hired journeymen as instructors and helpers...Business has been good; a variety of fine articles in wood-ware have been made for customers. Orders for every kind of machine-made building material have come in from Hampton and vicinity. No workmen are sent from the shop to compete with outside mechanics. This department built the girls' new dormitory, and will probably do the carpenter's work of the prospective chapel.¹⁷⁹

The last impressive building that Armstrong raised before his death was the Memorial Chapel. Somebricks for the Chapel were made on campus and additional blond- toned bricks were imported from New York, along with stained glass windows.

Dedicated on May 20, 1886 by Mark Hopkins, Armstrong's good friend who was now ex-president of Williams College. Hopkins stated that theinterior of this chapel has been finished chiefly by the students...The woodworking department of Huntington Industrial Works under James A. Brison did all the carpenter work of the new Marquand Memorial Chapel, the floors, ceilings, roof, doors, window frames, pews, etc., and this required the employment of extra outside hands, colored and white.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ *Annual Report*, (1885), 7. Hampton University Archives, Trade school Box.

¹⁷⁹ *Annual Report*, (1885) 8. Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

¹⁸⁰ Brown, "Memorial Chapel," 94-95.

The Memorial Chapel, Virginia Hall, Academic Hall (the Academy Building) and the other buildings and furnishings raised during Armstrong's years were "designed to increase the self-respect of the Negro students at Hampton" as Helen Ludlow stated when referring to the cornerstone laying for Virginia Hall. She continued that, "in building, furnishing, boarding, and in all work and living at Hampton, the idea is to surround the student with influences that will stimulate self-respect."¹⁸¹

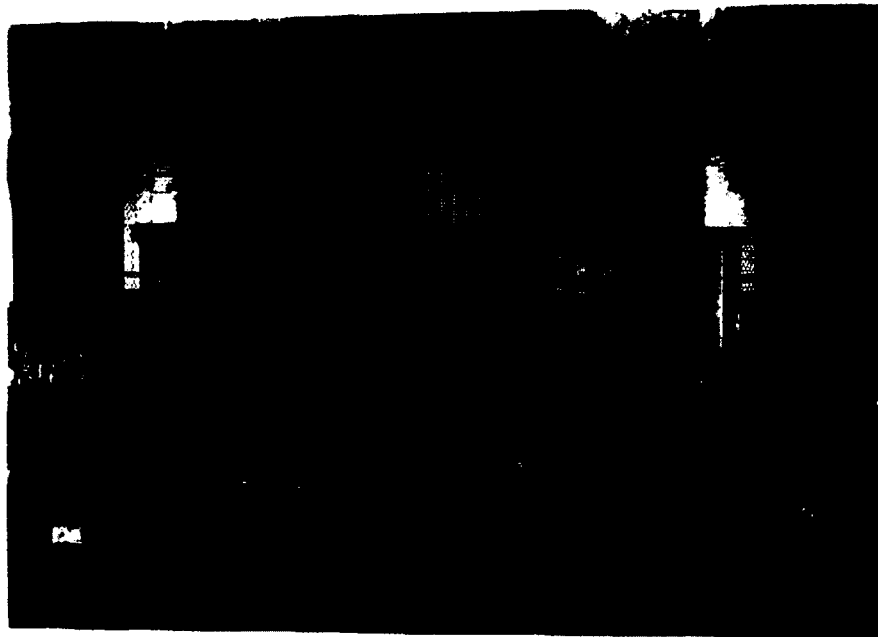


Figure 11, Interior of Chapel with students sitting in rows in their uniforms. Frances Benjamin Johnston. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs.

Hollis B. Frissell: The Change Begins, 1893 - 1917

¹⁸¹ Armstrong and Ludlow, *Hampton and It's Students*, 157.

Hollis B. Frissell stressed ideals of industry that were also reflected aesthetically in the pieces of furniture made by the students. Frissell proactively increased the exposure of the cabinet-making department by participating in several fairs and expositions. In order to display the achievement at Hampton, he launched a campaign to record student-made products through photographs. He also marketed the school as the venue to purchase woodwork from picture frames to fine quality reproductions of furniture. During this period, the curriculum was increasingly more stringent and targeted the need for students to develop more skills in business by focusing on accounting, advertising, and selling the furniture. This thrust towards industry made the cabinet-making department grow and expand extensively until its demise in the 1950s. The pieces that came out of Hampton are refined and sophisticated hand-crafted pieces, very different from those made during the Armstrong years, beginning with this table made by Indian students.



Figure 12, Indian Table, c. 1895. Hampton University Museum Collection, Crystal C. Johnson, photographer.

This intricate work table made of white oak “a hardy wood used most for furniture because it is rugged and shows less signs of abuse. Oak is commonly classified into two general groups, white and red oaks and is classified as one of the easier woods to work with and is adaptable to a lot of finishes.”¹⁸² Made by students under the direction of Edward Spennie, an instructor in the Trade School from 1891 until 1933, the table is still in beautiful condition. Note the detail of the front beading on the face of the table as well as the brass handles illustrated in *figure 12*. The interior drawers of the desk are made from poplar, “which is an all purpose wood except where you need a lot of strength. Poplar is also easily stained and can simulate more expensive woods. Poplar is good to use for the interior of a work table as in this case.”¹⁸³ The section that is facing out is ash, “a desirable wood, although it is not one of the leading furniture woods. It is used occasionally in the construction of medium grades of tables, chairs and bedroom furniture.”¹⁸⁴ Additionally, the inside of the drawer is cut into quarters which may have to do with the costs of the sections of wood acquired from Hampton’s sawmill. According to Mr. Adams’ thesis the cost of boards was based on the length and depth of the wood, *Figure 13*. It is also possible that the table was an assignment for students to try out different techniques in woodturning and design. The detail on the legs includes design patterns created on a lathe, *Figure 15*, including a pineapple design and a twisted reeded pattern.

¹⁸² James Matthews Adams, “A Technical Manual for the Furniture Trades,” (MA Thesis, Hampton Institute, 1947), 19 -20.

¹⁸³ Richardson.ddsbschools.ca.images/stories/technology/resources.

¹⁸⁴ Adams, “A Technical Manual,” 23-24.

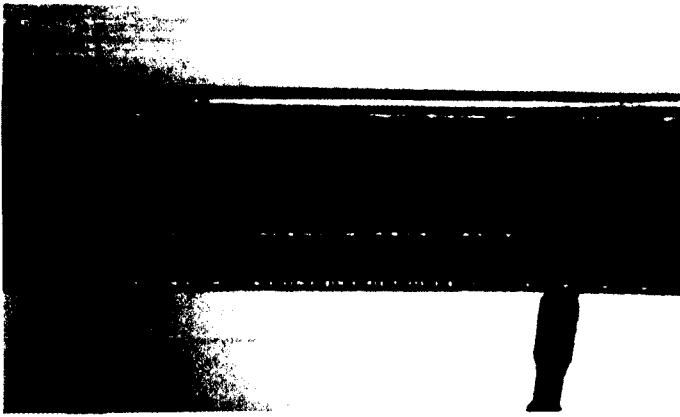


Figure 13, Detail of Indian table, note beading.



Figure 14, Detail of Indian table, exterior drawer



Figure 15, Detail of Indian table, legs with pineapple and reeding decoration

I found that the desk used by Emmeline Armstrong discussed earlier, and the Indian table had some similarities in construction. The way the drawer dovetails are nailed and put together supports my theory that the students used the purchased furniture and the items that belonged to the New England teachers as templates for their creations. This is the way many of the items collected for the Curiosity Room (see Chapter 4) were used. The drawers from the Indian table and the back of the desk are made with large slabs of wood and both are constructed in a similar manner.

Propagation of the Hampton Model

Principal Frissell, “The Builder” promoted the work of the cabinet-making department through *The Southern Workman* and strongly worded campaign letters to potential donors. Farmer conferences organized at Hampton also proved an excellent way of disseminating information. Farmers and their wives came to Hampton for agricultural lectures and for tours of the school’s farms, the dairy and other facilities. An important part of the conferences was “the exhibit or fair, where representative displays...[and] items were displayed.”¹⁸⁵ These events were perfect tools to extol the virtues of Hampton and the progress of African Americans:

...Hampton Institute also demonstrated masterful public relations skills and seemed especially adept in its control over its images. ...Hampton pursued its mission of Negro education in an increasingly inhospitable climate of Jim Crow laws, public lynchings, and enforced “accommodation,” as opportunities for enfranchisement, education and economic advancement for African Americans were being rapidly foreclosed. ...Clearly, Hampton was walking a tightrope. To ensure its survival the school needed to respond simultaneously to both those who

¹⁸⁵ Hunter, “Coming of Age: Hollis B. Frissell,” 240. See *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* by Mabel O. Wilson, where she discusses the 1907 Jamestown Exposition: 130 – 134. The exhibits were fairly successful but Blacks participation was lower than expected because of the Jim Crow climate.

wished to promote the progress of newly emancipated African Americans and those apprehensive about their newly acquired social mobility. Small wonder that the school's image could seem distinctly schizophrenic: the public fronts Hampton presented to North and South, blacks and whites school "insiders" and "outsiders" had to be carefully calibrated in response to ongoing racial prejudices and fears.¹⁸⁶

Principal Frissell also showcased students' work in Richmond at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition's Negro Building. At such activities, "Hampton also furnished a model living room, dining room and bedroom to show how to decorate a home attractively and inexpensively."¹⁸⁷

This was not just Hampton's or Frissell's idea alone. During this period the ideal of "Better Homes" was promoted to immigrants coming into the country as well as to other groups including African Americans. Union General Clinton B. Fisk, for example wrote *Plain Counsels for Freedmen*, a manual of conduct. This publication "follows a pattern of advice manuals aimed at the ambitious poor, such as William Cobbett's *Advice to Young Men of 1829*."¹⁸⁸ Fairs and Expositions were excellent locales to demonstrate the virtues that not only African Americans but also poor whites and many of the immigrants were expected to emulate.

Likely, the most successful promotion opportunity came to Principal Frissell from Special Agent Thomas J. Calloway, who was an African American hired to coordinate the participants in the Negro section at the Paris Exposition of 1900:

¹⁸⁶ Jeannene M. Przyblyski, "American Visions at the Paris Exposition, 1900: Another Look at Frances Benjamin Johnston's Hampton Photographs," *Art Journal*, vol. 57, no. 3, (Fall 1998), 62.

¹⁸⁷ Hunter, "Coming of Age: Hollis B. Frissell," 240- 242.

¹⁸⁸ Barbara Burlison Mooney, "The Comfortable Tasty Framed Cottage: An African American Architectural Iconography," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol 61, no. 1 (March 2002), 52.

Paris Exposition

December 20, 1899

Dr. H. B. Frissell
Hampton Institute
Hampton, VA

My Dear Sir:

I am very anxious to arrange a collective exhibit of some one of the Southern States to be used as a type of other Southern States. This exhibit, while small in compass, I would like to be so carefully and creditably prepared that it would furnish evidences for scientific discussion. The plan would be to take in views of mills and factories in which colored people are employed, statistics of ownerships of property, samples of products such as would take very small space, and anything else in this line which would furnish exact information or attractive object lessons as to the development of the Negroes of that State. I think that within two or three weeks I shall be in position to appropriate 2,000 or 2,500 dollars for such an exhibit. I thought that from the investigations which you have made from time to time through the State of Virginia it might occur to you, first, whether such a scheme is practical for the purposes, secondly, whether the money named would be sufficient, and thirdly, whether it can be accomplished between now and the opening of the Exposition on the 15 of April, 1900. If you think it practical, in a general way, I would like to have you write me and I shall very likely come down and discuss the plan in detail with you.

Very truly,

Thomas J. Calloway
Special Agent on Negro Education
Letter Head –United States Commission to the Paris Exposition of 1900¹⁸⁹

Frissell hired Frances Benjamin Johnston, the first American woman to achieve prominence as a photographer, to document Hampton's successes for display at the

¹⁸⁹ Document, Letter from Calloway to Frissell, Hampton University Archives, Frissell Box

Exposition. Johnston had a professional studio in Washington, D. C. where she was known for her photographs of the political elite of the District. She also became quite well known for documentary photographs like those she took at Hampton and at Tuskegee Institute.

Johnston took hundreds of photographs of not only classroom scenes, but also students at the Whittier School, the surrounding rural community and Newport News Shipbuilding Yard. Promoting Hampton's ideal, "The Hampton photographs were displayed in the Palace of Social Economy as part of the American Negro Exhibit, assembled with the participation of such prominent black leaders as W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington." The exhibition was:

Presented among books, charts, artifacts, models, photomontages, and many other photographs as documentary evidence illustrating "the educational and industrial progress of the Negro race in the United States," the Hampton images received a grand prize, as did the exhibition as a whole.¹⁹⁰

Jeannene M. Przyblytski's analysis of Johnston's Hampton photographs notes the importance of this particular exhibition:

...at the very least, the Exposition opened up a space in which people were given the opportunity "to know [as well as] be known, to become the subject [as well as] the objects of knowledge... in such a context it seems worth emphasizing that blacks not only were exhibited at the Exposition, they also visited. As consumers of the Paris Exposition, African Americans in particular were especially attentive to the representation of their own community. An article in the Colored American proudly pointed out the presence of Henry Ossawa Tanner's paintings in the Palace of Fine Arts."¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Przyblytski, "American Visions at the Paris Exposition," 67.

¹⁹¹ Przyblytski, "American Visions at the Paris Exposition," 66.

Du Bois, who contributed a great deal to the development of the exhibitions and particularly the sociological study of African Americans in Georgia, wrote a review of the Paris Exposition complimenting Hampton's photographs:

From Hampton there is an especially excellent series of photographs illustrating the Hampton idea of "teaching by doing..."¹⁹²

Also, Special Agent Calloway presented a vivid portrait of Hamptons' exhibition, "In the adjoining case were shown 150 photographs, which were among the finest to be found any where in the Exposition. Hampton Institute sent them to tell the story of her work, and they served the purpose admirably." ¹⁹³

Over one hundred images were displayed at the Exposition, and traveled to other events to promote Hampton. Copies of the images by Johnston were rediscovered many years later in a bookstore in a scrapbook and were donated to The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Museum of Modern Art published forty-four photographs in 1966 in conjunction with an exhibition in the Museum's Edward Steichen Photography Center. This exhibition helped to bring these photographs to public view again. ¹⁹⁴The

¹⁹²Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt.1900,"The American Negro at Paris," *The Monthly Review of Reviews*, vol. SSII, no. 5 (November) 575-577.<http://www.webdubois.org/dbANParis.html>.

¹⁹³Calloway, Thomas J., "The Negro Exhibit."In *Report of the Commissioner-General for the United States to the International Universal Exposition, Paris 1900*, Volume II. U. S. Senate Document No. 232 (56th Congress, 2d Session. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 463-467.<http://www.webdubois.org/CallowayParisExhibit.html>).

¹⁹⁴The Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress has a collection of Frances Benjamin Johnston notes and photographs including the Hampton images. The Hampton University Museum and Archives is also the repository of her work on Hampton. For additional information on Frances Benjamin Johnston see, the forward in, *The Hampton Album*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966. Other sources include Jeannene M. Przyblyski, "American Visions at the Paris Exposition, 1900: Another Look at Frances Benjamin Johnston's Hampton Photographs," *Art Journal*, Fall 1998, vol. 57, no. 3.; For more information on Dubois and African American participation in Expositions and Fairs, Robert W. Williams, Ph.D. is a political science professor at Bennett College, in Greensboro, North Carolina. He has developed a website on W. E. B. DuBois that includes links to sites with materials written by and about DuBois. The site also includes links to primary sources which relate to DuBois and his role in the 1900 Paris Exposition,

photographs include illustrations of cabinet-making and the furniture used in the classrooms and some of the homes in the area that had served as residences for Hampton graduates.



Figure 16, Men in Carpentry Shop, c. 1900. Frances Benjamin Johnston. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs.

<http://www.webdubois.org/wdb-1900exp.html>. There are additional sources on the internet that relate to African American's participation in not only the Paris Exposition but other world fairs including <http://edwardianpromenade.com/society/the-negro-exhibit>; http://www.buffalonian.com/history/articles/1901-50/ucqueens/negro_exhibit.htm).

Additionally, the 2012 publication, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums*, Mabel O. Wilson is an excellent resource for the background and details of African American participation in fairs, expositions. See also Robert W. Rydell, author of *All the World's a Fair*.

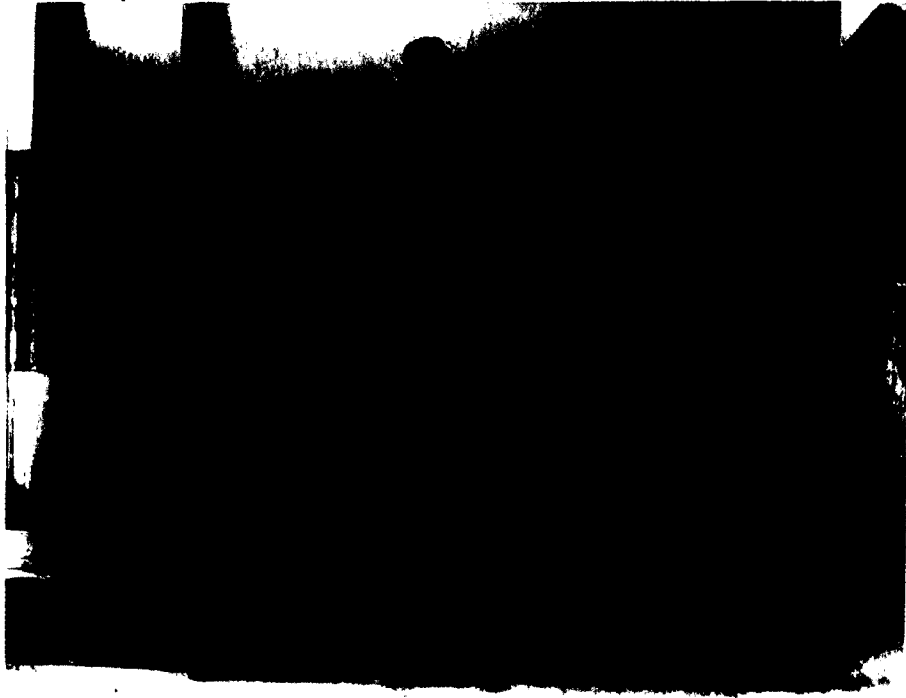


Figure 17, Students at work on house, c. 1900. Frances Benjamin Johnston, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs.

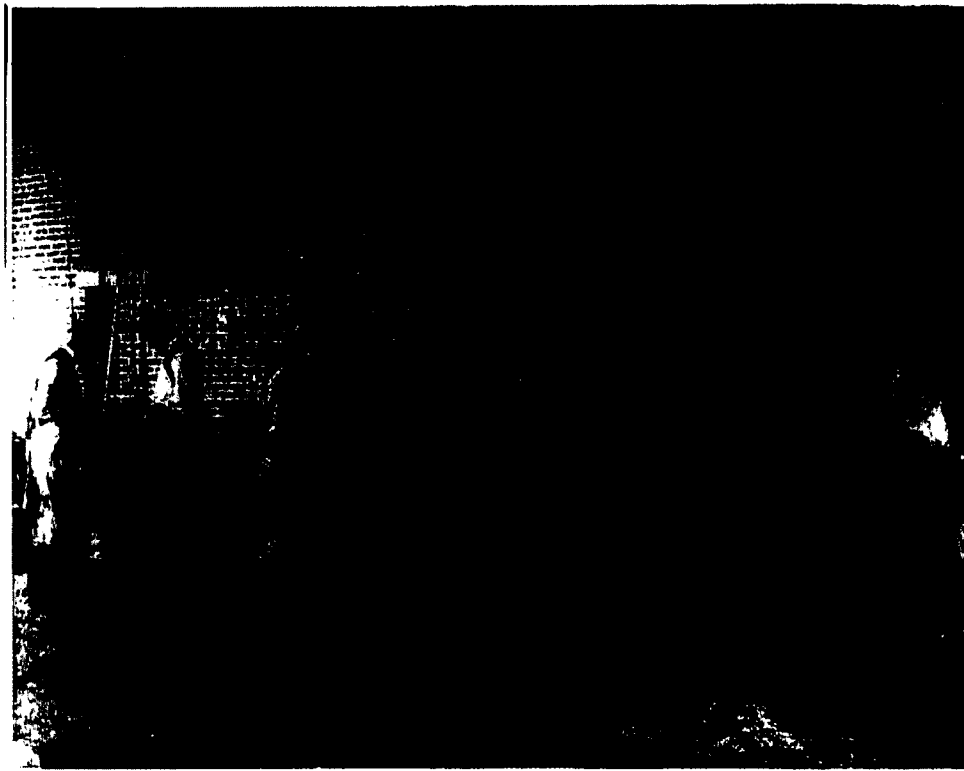


Figure 18, Men using machinery in woodworking shop. c. 1900. Frances Benjamin Johnston, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs

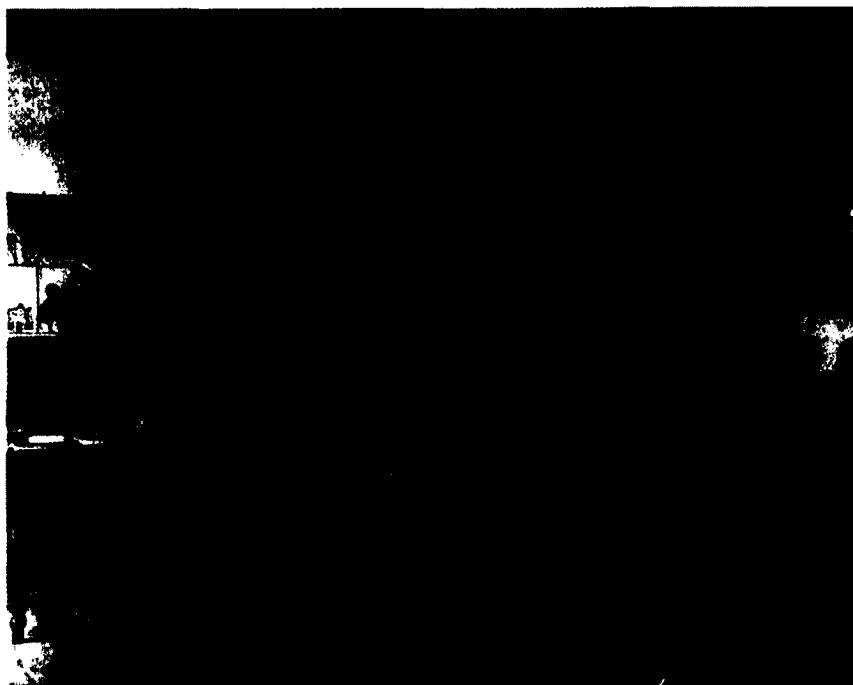
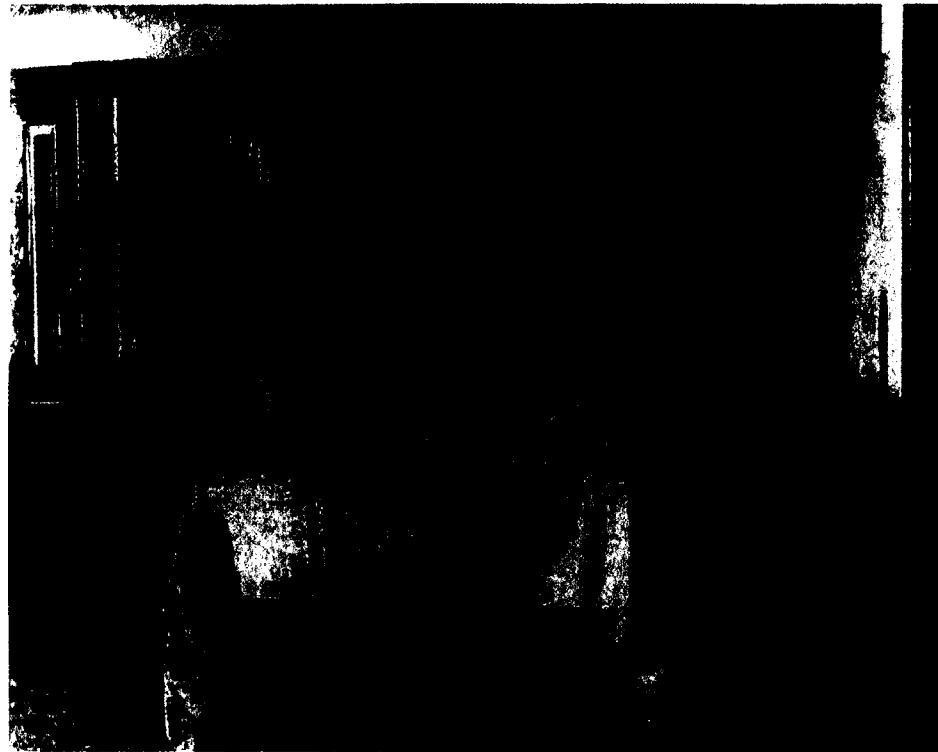


Figure 19, Class in Egyptian History. Note the simple wooden benches the students are sitting on. Frances Benjamin Johnston, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs



Figure 20, Class in sloyd [woodworking], Frances Benjamin Johnston, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs

Figure 21, below. Graduates dining at home. Frances Benjamin Johnston. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs



Frances Benjamin Johnston documented the image that Hampton wanted to portray, including the “The Better Homes ideal.” Some of the photographs also illustrated the old rural houses or cabins that African Americans lived in prior to their association with Hampton. Homemaking and cleanliness were essential to the development of a Hampton graduate:

In 1908 ...manual training for young men included a number of skills such as woodworking that taught students how to make furniture and other items that would be “needed in an ordinary home.” ... The purpose of manual training for young women was, according to the institution’s catalogue, “to enable them to make good homes and to prepare them for industrial teaching.” Female students were required to perform manual labor in cooking, sewing, washing, ironing, and cleaning dormitories and teachers’ rooms. Creating the ideal home was so central to the Hampton

mission, however, that female students were also allowed to take classes in “simple carpentry, glazing, whitewashing, painting, and papering” as well as chair caning and upholstery because they taught girls “to do ordinary repairing and keep their homes clean and attractive.”¹⁹⁵

As the Johnston photograph show, craftsmanship in the cabinet-making department was becoming more polished. This is further substantiated by a feature in the 1913 volume of *The Southern Workman* that described the furniture industry including the materials used by the students:

The cabinetmakers in the first year of their trade receive instruction in the technical carpentry shop and have the same lecture work as the regular carpenters. In the remaining years of the course the cabinetmakers receive special instruction in joinery and carving, which leads on to the construction of furniture with good lines and proportions and of attractive articles for the home and school, including some cases, desks, chests, screens, trays, and tables. They are also taught upholstering, woodturning, furniture staining, and the finishing of various woods. They learn how to use properly and effectively walnut, pine, cedar, bass, cypress, and mahogany. Like the carpenters they prepare rough sketches and then finished drawings of their work. They are encouraged to do some furniture designing. They, too, have good tools and machines with which to work. In Clarke Hall may be found some of the best products of these tradesmen.¹⁹⁶

The publication also states that “in the cabinet-making course the students have, in addition to the shop talks on the general principles of joinery, special instruction in historic styles of furniture and in the construction of articles usually made by cabinetmakers.”¹⁹⁷

Furniture Sales 1913-29

¹⁹⁵Mooney, “The Comfortable Tasty Framed Cottage,” 53.

¹⁹⁶*The Southern Workman*, (May 1913), 278.

¹⁹⁷*The Southern Workman* (May 1913), 278.

Students were paid wages to work in the Trade School which helped with their educational expenses. However, the trades were also used to generate revenue for the school as a whole. According to the 1915 – 1916, Report from the Trade School submitted by Superintendent, H. J. DeYarmett:

Sales, The total sales of the Trade School last year amounted to \$118,339.01 which is an increase of \$30,118.23 over the previous year. Sales to the Institute from the Trade School Department amounted to \$70,838.40... Sales Outside the Institute amounted to 34,7456...products were shipped to thirty-four states, District of Columbia and Canada.¹⁹⁸

As far as I can ascertain, the reports submitted by Superintendent DeYarmett indicate that the Trade School operated separately from the Institute supplying many of the resources for the campus. The account books had to be kept very accurately to keep a tally of all of the production work completed and by which department. Mr. DeYarmett's reports would also include a list of work completed by each department in the Trade School:

Trade School Report, 1913-1914

July 1, 1912 to June 30, 1913, Partial list of work done in Trade School, Cabinet-making Department

Made 80 tea tables and trays, 6 tea trays, 16 muffin stands, 6 folding screens, 13 assorted boxes, 23 assorted pieces of furniture and 176 picture frames. Repaired 30 assorted pieces of furniture. Filled 295 orders.

Partial list of work done by the Carpentry Department:

Put up 6 buildings and additions, made alterations to 2 buildings and 33 rooms, made and hung 7 fire doors, made 41 window and door screens, 13 signs, 7 sets of bookshelves, 125 pieces of miscellaneous furniture, 4 pigeon holds and file cases, folding screens, 22 picture and mirror frames, 2 tool chests, 1 play house, 311 caning models, 4 checker board tables, 1 magazine rack and 2 book racks... repaired 421 pieces of miscellaneous furniture. Filled 3034 orders.

¹⁹⁸ Report from the Trade School, submitted by Superintendent H. J. DeYarmett, 1915 – 1916, Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

Upholstery Department

Made 32 cane, shuck and raffia chairs, 34 small chairs, 48 foot stools, 108 mattresses, 193 pillows, 10 chair cushions, 17 boat cushions. Re-upholstered 15 pieces of furniture, caned 36 chairs, renovated 229 mattresses and 56 pillows. Filled 654 orders.

From this report of work completed between July 1, 1912 to June 30, 1913, it appears that there was some duplicate work being done by the individual departments. By the 1915-1916 Report from the Trade School, the work was more specifically tied to the department:

1915 -1916 Trade School Report

Cabinet-making Department

Made 163 picture and mirror frames, and 1127 pieces of furniture including foot stools, trunk sets, folding screens, medicine cabinets, tables, muffin stands, file cases, bookracks, tea tables and trays, clover leaf tables, chests, glove box, worsted reel, sewing racks, checker boards, checker-board table, boxes, stool and chair frame. Repaired 505 pieces of furniture.

Carpentry

23 closet and cupboards

Losses for the Trade School in February 28, 1929

Cabinet-making	\$1112.47	loss
Upholstery	\$823.39	loss

January 31, 1929

Cabinet-making	\$950.21	loss
Upholstery	\$897.81	loss ¹⁹⁹

Such reports aided fundraising for the school, but also taught students about business practices and helped them to develop a lifestyle with higher aspirations.

The social and cultural development of the Trade School student into a tradesman was evident in extracurricular activities such as Teas and the Trade School Choir. The change in Hampton's educational philosophy in the cabinet-making department which the students and some alumni demanded suggests that it was a deliberate policy to guarantee that the furniture made and purchased from Hampton served a higher purpose. Thus for some African Americans, the furniture represented social status at home and in the workplace. Frances Benjamin Johnston's photograph of the Hampton graduate at home, *figure 21*, illustrates this ideal. The dining room set now made in the cabinet-making shop, for example, became an indication these African Americans were moving away from furniture that served purely utilitarian purposes – a far cry from the straw mattresses of 1868 and a testimony to successful "uplift." Through Frissell's efforts the furniture department, though expensive to maintain, produced some excellent cabinetmakers and lasting photographic images and pieces of furniture that can be appreciated through the ages.

The 1940s through 1950s

The Furniture Trades in the 1940s included both cabinet-making and upholstery. Photographs by Reuben V. Burrell document this period. Burrell became interested in

¹⁹⁹ Report from the Trade School, H. J. DeYarmett, Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

photography in high school and was one of the first members of a new camera club that sprang up among students during the early 1940s. The first camera club at Hampton Institute, the Kiquotan Kamera Klub, began in 1893 and its most noted photographs served as illustrations in two collections of Paul Laurence Dunbar's books.

Along with Burrell's documentary photographs, graduates from the cabinet-making department have provided information on this period through interviews and oral histories. The furniture produced shows that the training, the materials used, and the craftsmanship were outstanding. The program not only developed artisans but concentrated on producing vocational teachers who left Hampton with training in construction of custom-made period and modern furniture as well as furniture restoration. Whatever field the student decided to focus on they would have instruction in both for:

The men who leave these shops will not be narrow specialists. The cabinetmakers will have had instruction in upholstering, and the upholsterers will have had instruction in woodfinishing. The aim is to produce men who are well-rounded in the furniture trades generally, but who also have the "plus" acquired through thorough specialization.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰*The Hampton Bulletin*, October 1947.



Figure 22, Furniture Trades Workshop, Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940s.

Instructors

Hampton hired top-tier instructors for the cabinet-making department including from their own pool of graduates. The majority of the instructors were white but because of the students' strikes and demands the institution hired some African American teachers. The partial list below dates to the late 1930s and illustrates the background of some of the instructors.

Table 2

List of Furniture Trades Instructors	
Roy Williams, Dept. Head	
High School	
Univ. of Penn. – 1 year	
Experience: Apprenticeship (Uphol.) ...6 years	
Journeyman (Uphol.)... 8 years	
Upholstering and general furniture business...16 years	
James M. Adams, Instructor, cabinet	
H.I. T.S. – certificate, 1927	
H.I.- B.S. degree, 1933	
H.I. – SS Ed. Course	
Experience: Mechanic..... 5 ½ yrs.	
Foreman..... 3 ½ yrs.	
Teaching – H. I. 2 1/3 yrs.	
C.C.C.5 – 2/3	
W. P. Mitchell, Instructor, Wood Finishing	
High School graduate	
T.T. Courses given by State Board of Education	
Trade Apprenticeship – 3 years	
Experience: Journeyman.....18 years	
Foreman 2 years	
Teaching, H. I., ...17 years	

201

Source: Trade School Report on Faculty, Hampton University Archives

One of the African American teachers in the cabinet-making department was James M. Adams. A graduate of Hampton, Adams obtained a Diploma from the Trade School in 1927, and a Bachelor of Science in 1933. Adams worked on and off as an instructor, head of the department from roughly 1936 to 1942; and from 1942-44, he was

²⁰¹ Trade School Report on Faculty, Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

a senior instructor of the Navy Training program that was based on Hampton's campus. After 1945 he was given indefinite tenure at Hampton through the 1960s.

Originally from Lexington, Kentucky, Adams obtained a Master of Arts from Hampton Institute in 1947. His thesis entitled, "A Technical Manual for The Furniture Trades," documents his effort to compile in one text the various aspects of woodworking. The completed thesis was not used as a textbook in the classroom but Harold Evans, a 1950 graduate of Hampton stated in an interview, "I think all of us had one. Well, I think he gave all of us one when we were about to graduate."²⁰² Reuben Burrell reflected that James Adams "was a master craftsman."²⁰³ Harold Evans' memories of Adams are just as complimentary. According to Evans, Adams made furniture for the White House. While it appeared that Evans was referring to the desk made by the school for President Roosevelt (*figure 23*), he did not identify that as the desk:

No, that's not the one. That one was quite a job. He made things do ____ in the cabinet-making –that was so beautiful you almost wanted to cry. It was swirly. It had a pie crust on it and we used to look at that thing. Pie Crust –you know those little edges. It was all done by hand, not a machine. In fact, once we received a piece of the lumber it would be rough. And you had to take your plane and level it out. When they said it was handmade truly it was handmade.

It was a tilt top table and it was round like a piecrust. And, the material. .. when working with wood you have to work a certain way. So he strolled that thing out, he was a genius, to me anyway.²⁰⁴

The replica of General George Washington's desk presented to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt during one of her visits to Hampton for President Roosevelt, may have been made by Adams or at least he was the supervisor when that piece was built in the late 1930s. The

²⁰² Harold Evans. Interview with author, 2012 May. Hampton, Virginia. Digital Recorder.

²⁰³ Burrell Conversation, April 2009.

²⁰⁴ Harold Evans Interview, 2012.

same desk was commissioned by a white local business man and attributed to Trade School Students. The flat top Sheraton style desk is made from mahogany which was used extensively by the school.

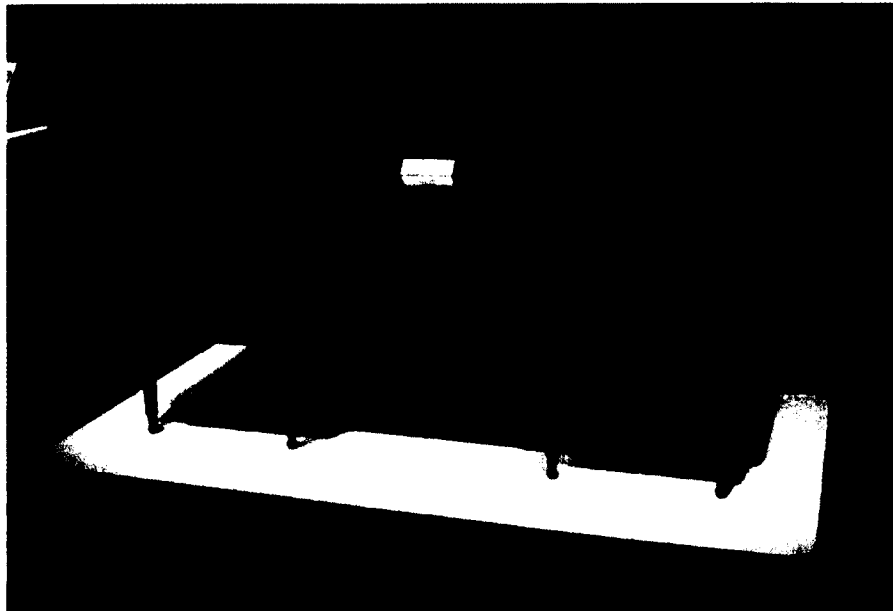


Figure 23, Replica of George Washington Sheraton Style Desk. Promised Gift, Hampton University Museum Collection, Greg Adams, Photographer



Figure 24, Instructor James Adams in his home. Hampton University Museum Oral History Collection.

James Adams's experience in cabinet-making went beyond the campus. He worked at The Department of Interior, United States Civilian Conservation Corps for twenty-two months. Additionally, Adams worked as a Journeyman cabinetmaker at T. A. Fountain located in Phoebus, Virginia. *Figure 24*, is Adams in his home which was located in Phoebus, Virginia. He is sitting among some of the furniture he made including the pie crust table on the right as described by Harold Evans. The pie crust table is a well-known revival piece that requires considerable skill.

T. A. Fountain, also a graduate from Hampton, opened a business as did William Feffie who also was a cabinet-making graduate from Hampton. Fountain was known throughout Hampton as one of the best upholsters and refinishers of furniture. He is recalled in a historic brochure on the town of Phoebus as one who was available for cabinet-making and refinishing of furniture. His business was located not too far from the campus, and is illustrated in *figure 25*. The photograph was provided by Mr. Fountain's nephew, Calvin Pearson who is in possession of several pieces of furniture made by Mr. Fountain. When Mr. Fountain was married to Mayme Bowman, the upholstery instructor at Hampton, she also worked as an upholster in the business

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Figure 25, Below, T. A. Fountain property, c. 1940s. Courtesy Calvin Pearson.

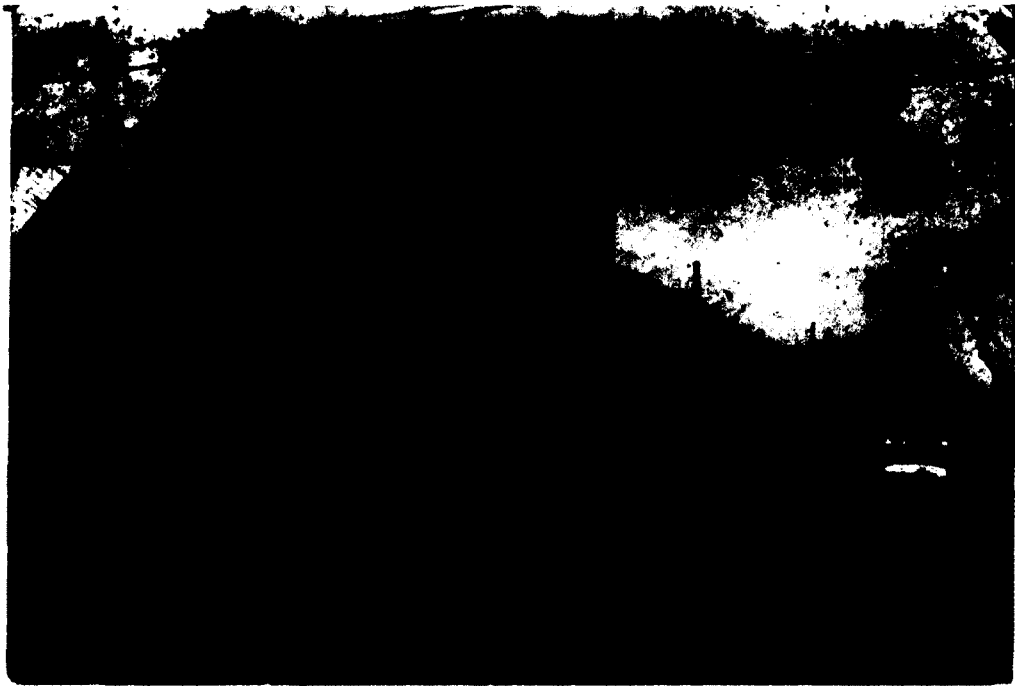


Figure 26, Mayme Bowman in Upholstery Workroom, Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940.

Many graduates had fond memories of Mayme V. Bowman. A native of Richmond, Virginia, Mrs. Bowman served as an Associate Senior Instructor in upholstery between 1949 through 1950. Bowman also had an upholstery shop in Hampton off of Frissell Street. It is unclear if her business was with Fountain or with her second husband. Bowman worked closely with Adams, as indicated by Burrell and former students: “they would make a chair or something and then it would have to be carried in her shop to upholster it. That divan’s – you know that diamond pattern.”²⁰⁵ (*figure 26*)

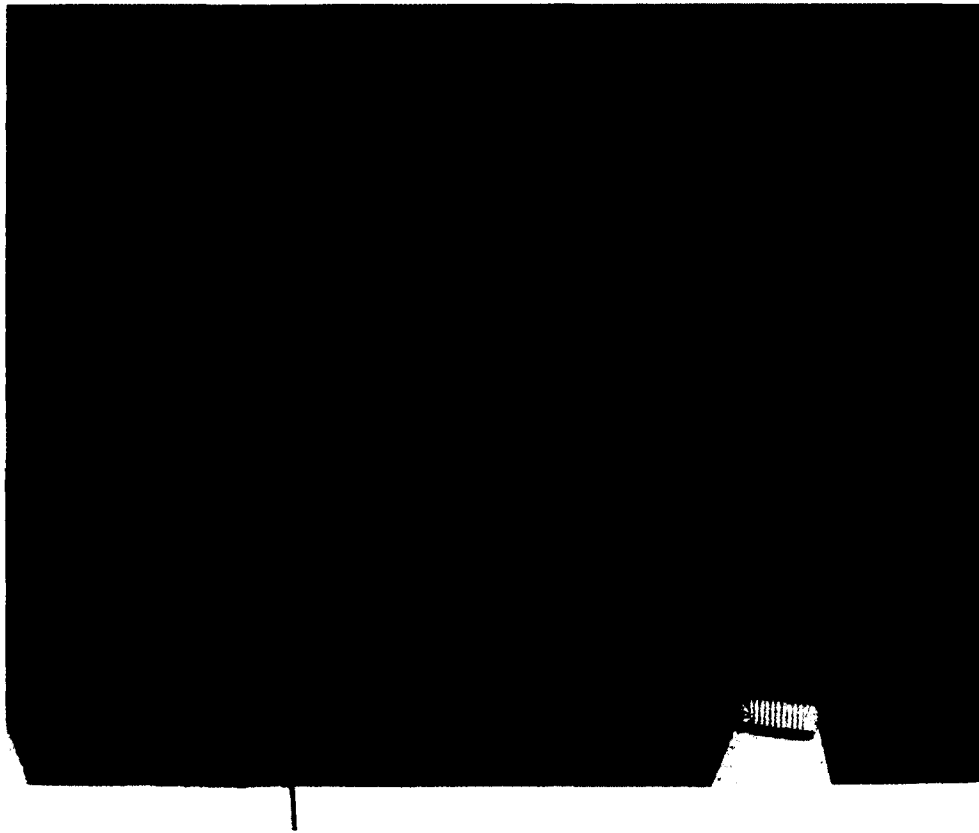
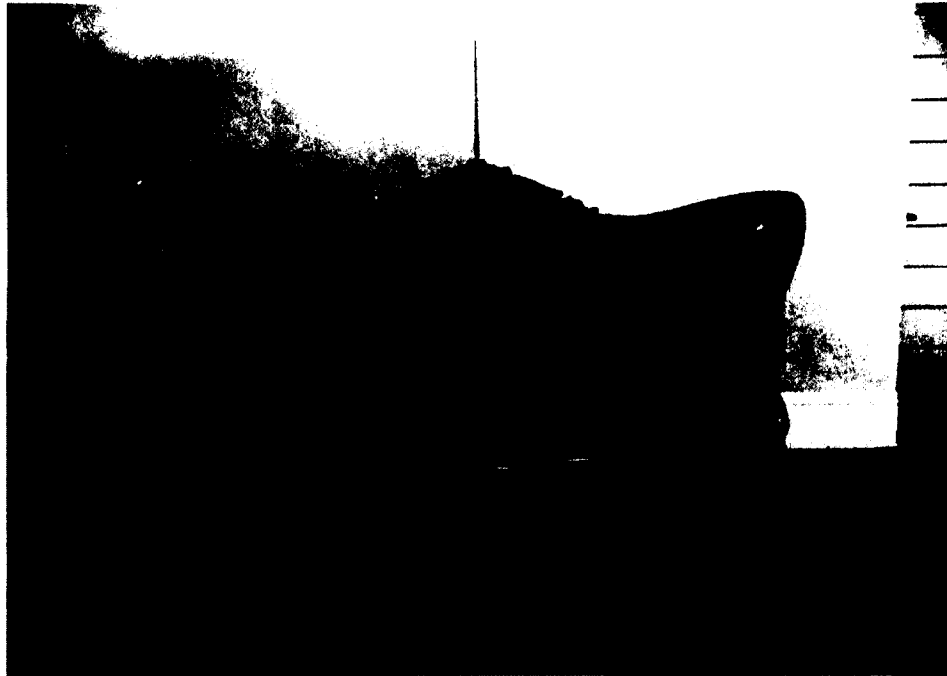


Figure 27, Leonard “Joe” Young when an instructor at Hampton illustrating the Divan pattern in upholstery. Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940s.

Figure 28, below, Colonial Revival Queen Anne style Settee with Divan Pattern, Reuben V. Burrell, Photographer, c. 1940s-50s.

²⁰⁵ Burrell Conversation, April 2009.



Harold Evans who was a cabinet-making student remembers Mayme Bowman as an excellent instructor and a kind and caring individual. He recalled:

She cared about us as individuals and she also cared about us learning what she had to offer and that was quite a bit. And of course, as cabinetmakers, upholstering was the counterpart. Byline, like you make a chair, you should be able to upholster it. That was not our major, our major was furniture. She cared about you and was interested in everything we did. And, also motherly like.

Specifically, Bowman taught the cabinetmakers and the upholstery majors the various stages of upholstering like webbing:

She would teach you – well, we would make the chair, and its just a frame, she would teach us how to put in the springs, the webbing and the packing and then how to cover it. Make it pretty and smooth like that particular chair she isstanding in front of there... Webbing, it is very strong. We didn't have all of these metal pieces. It was very strong. It looks like a croker sack, and you put this down there and thesprings were on the back. Springs are not like they are today. Once you get it all tied down then you would proceed to cover it.

Evans continued on the differences of upholster majors versus furniture majors:

They did have a lot of them that were upholstery majors and they went into the finer parts of it like tufting. You see that old part like with diamonds in the back—they went into that - all of the finer parts of it. We were taught some of everything like caning. But we didn't go into the details because our details were with furniture.²⁰⁶

Although Evans was over eighty years old at the time of the interview he had not forgotten what teacher Bowman taught him. Much of what he recalled was listed in the document, Upholsterer Work Process for a first year upholstery student:

Upholsterer Work Process, March 29, 1949
First Year – Upholstery, Plain
Processes

1. Preparing the frame
 - (a) Rasping the rough edges
 - (b) Adding supplementary blocks and rails
2. Webbing
 - (a) Webbing applied to open work
 - (b) Webbing around awkward corners and recessed rails
3. Sewing and tying springs
 - (a) Stitched, independent edges
 - (b) Making and tying spring edges
4. First burlap sewing
 - (a) Building a hard edge
 - (b) Building nosings
5. First Stuffing
 - (a) Weaving successive layers
6. Covering with burlap
 - (a) Stitching through the burlap
7. Filling the edges
 - (a) Regulating the edge
 - (b) Stitching the edge
8. Top Stuffing
 - (a) Application of stuffing

²⁰⁶ Harold Evans Interview, May 2012.

9. Preparation, Back and Arms
 - (a) Frame preparation and adding rails
 - (b) Webbing
 - (c) Building covering pads
10. Building the back
 - (a) Springingup
 - (b) Double Stuffing
 - (c) Stitching
11. Measuring quantities of covering materials
 - (a) Calculating position of pattern
 - (b) Economizing on materials
 - (c) Piecing out
12. Down Top
 - (a) Filled padding
 - (b) Cushioned Forms
13. Covering and Trimming
 - (a) Lining
 - (b) Applying trimming
14. Covering and trimming screens
 - (a) Calculating position of pattern
 - (b) Economizing on materials
 - (c) Fleecing out materials

Students become proficient their second year in learning how to produce Front roll on's, Marking burlap for tufts, pulling in twins for tufts, drawing in tufts, layout of arms (tufted, plain, pillow); measuring for quantities, and covering, seats, back, arms and linen. The third and fourth year of the program is an apprentice period.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Document, Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box

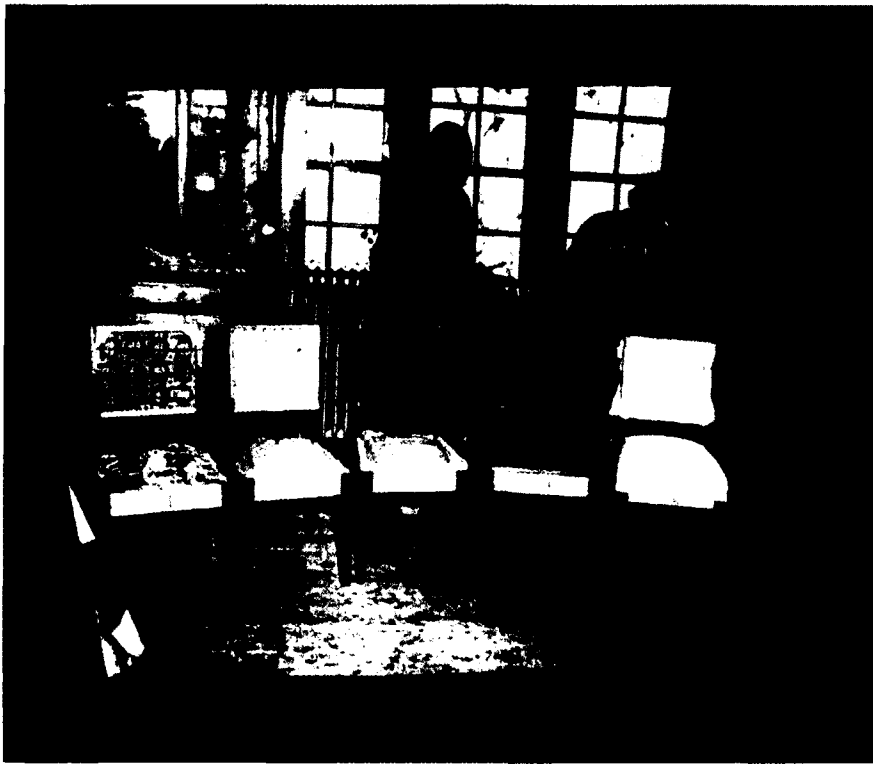


Figure 29, Training in Upholstering, Courtesy Joyce Hudgens Blair, c. 1940s-50s.



Figure 30, above. Summer Session. Instructor Mayme Bowman with Furniture Trades students which included cabinet-making and upholstery majors, Standing left to right: Lewis Johnson, *Theodore Gross, Harold Evans, Mamye Bowman, Billy Smith, unidentified (Evans thought that he was in upholstery), Charles Lowery. 2nd row- left to right: Vincent Payne and *John Albert Hudgens, Sitting on floor – left to right: Gardner Brown and Calvin Crawley. The asterisk indicates that they were veterans. Evans recalls that they were working that summer restoring furniture from the Mansion House. Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940s-50s.²⁰⁸

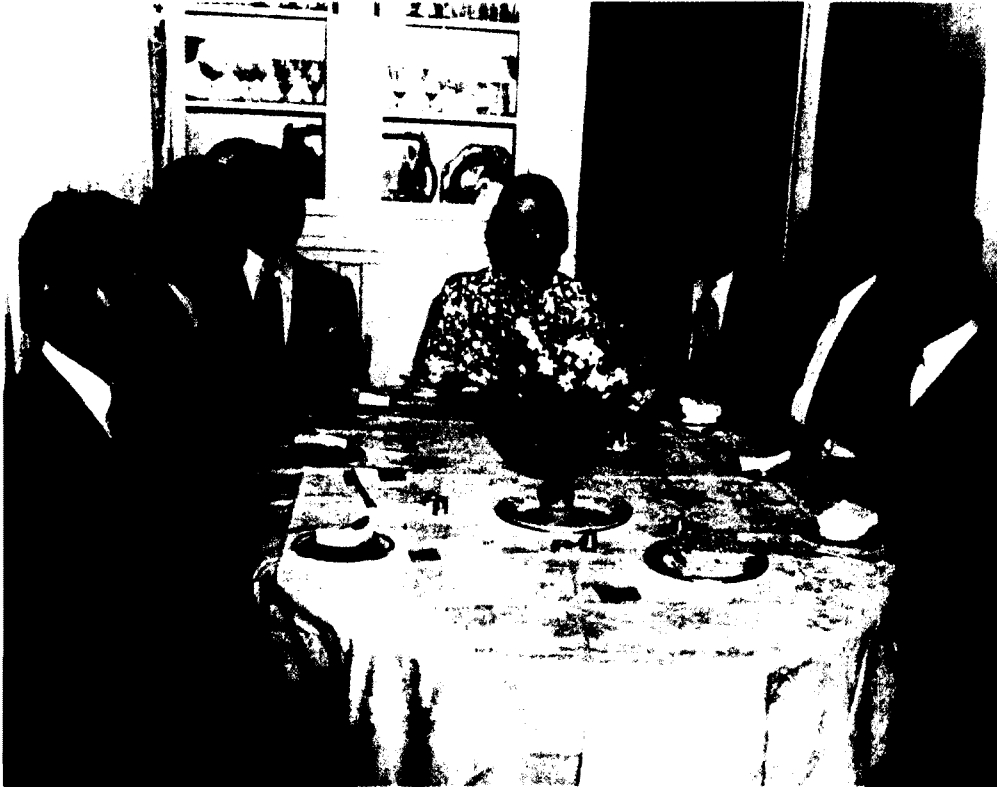


Figure 31, Furniture Trades students attended Teas and other celebrations. This event took place in the Holly Tree Inn located on the campus. L to R, Harold Evans, (unidentified), (unidentified), Instructors Bowman and Adams, Charles Lowery, (unidentified). Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940s-50s.

James Adams and Mayme Bowman were not the only African Americans working on campus into the 1940s or instructing students in the cabinet-making department. Other students who graduated from Hampton were also hired. Leonard Joseph Young who went through Hampton with Burrell was hired mainly for repairing furniture.

²⁰⁸ Harold Evans Interview, May 2012.

Joe Young, he preferred using the name Joe instead of Leonard, was an excellent draftsman and kept some of his drawings from when he was a student in cabinet-making.

Technical drawing was a part of their studies:

I am in possession of seven beautiful hand drawings of colonial style period furniture which I made while a student in training at Hampton...It is doubtful that you can find drawings of this kind today. My drawing instructors at that time (1939-1940) were Mr. Frank, Bill Moses, and Mr. Livas. We were required to make drawings from pictures in a furniture book by determining the scale, first in pencil, then ink, then make a blue print. Once we had a drawing, we had to go to our workshop and construct the item of furniture which when finished was placed in the show room with items for sale.²⁰⁹

Two examples of the drawings are below:

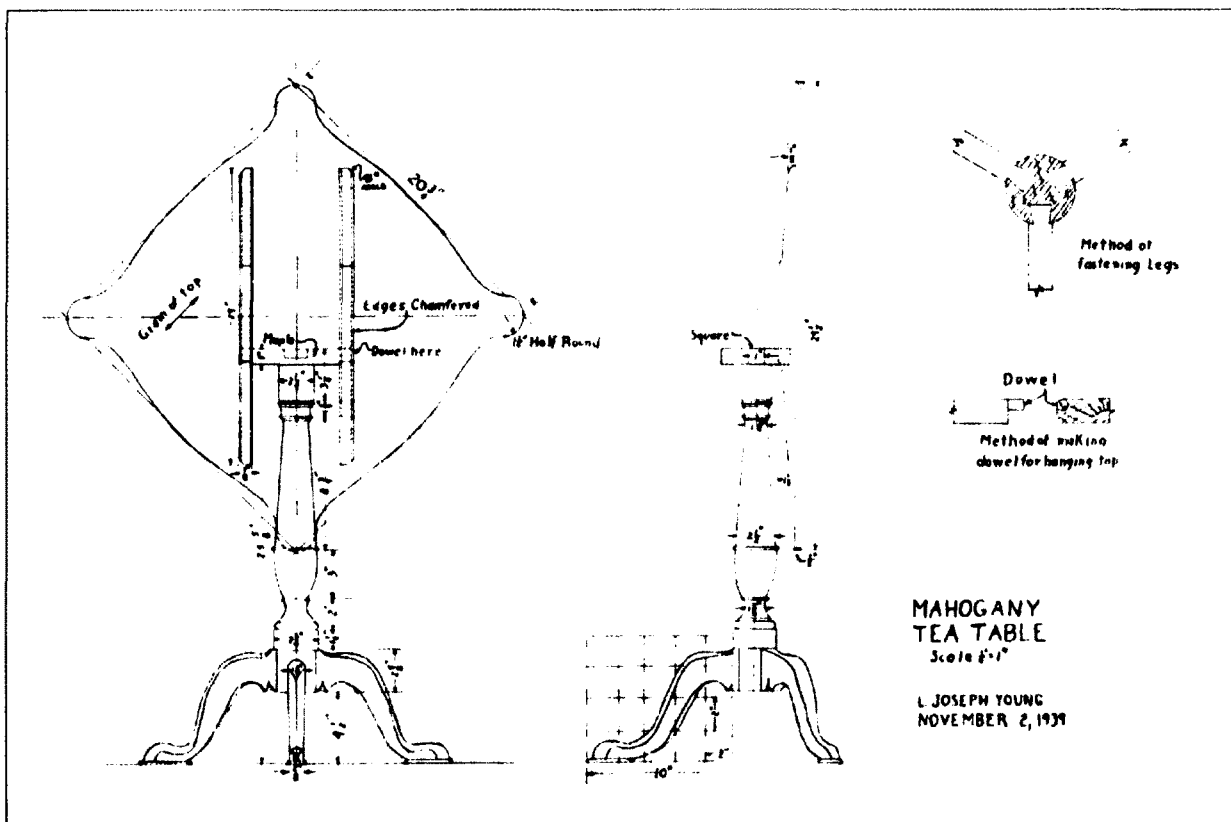


Figure 32, Leonard "Joe" Young, Mahogany Tea Table Blueprint, November 2, 1939, Hampton University Museum Collection

²⁰⁹ Leonard J. Young, Sr., letter to author, February 5, 2005.

Figure 33, Leonard "Joe" Young, Mahogany Chest of Drawers Blueprint, December 13, 1939, Hampton University Museum Collection

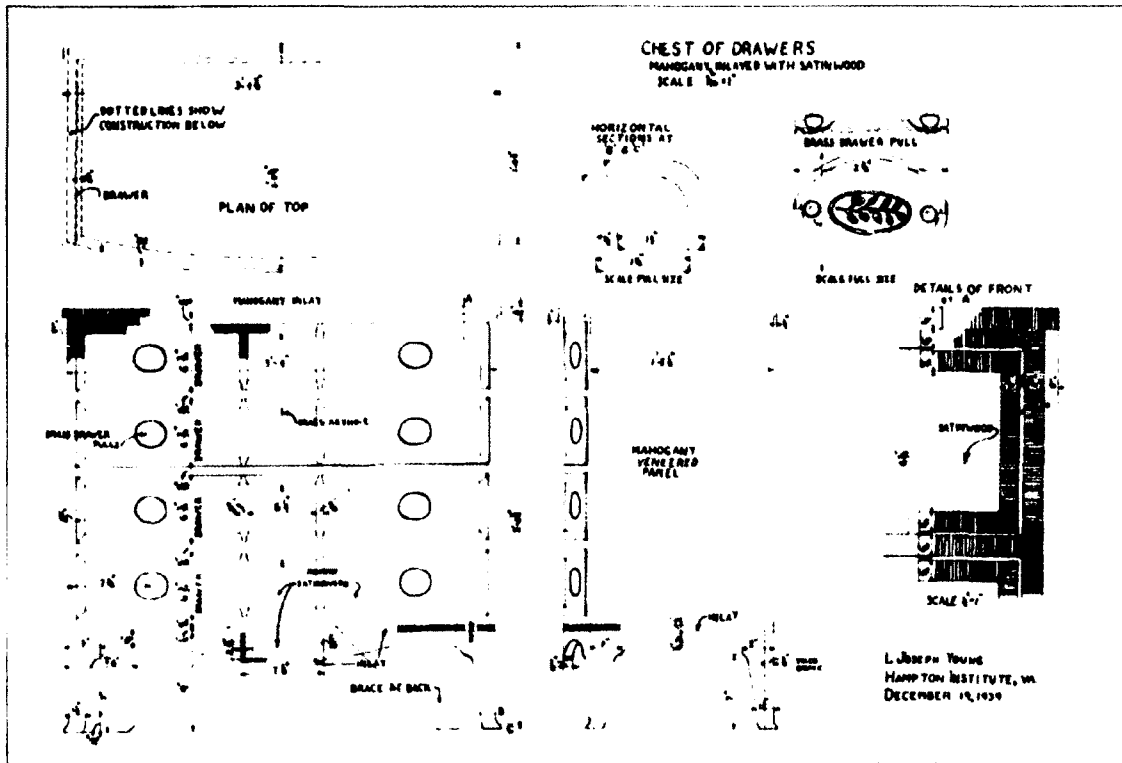


Figure 34, Furniture Shop, Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940s.

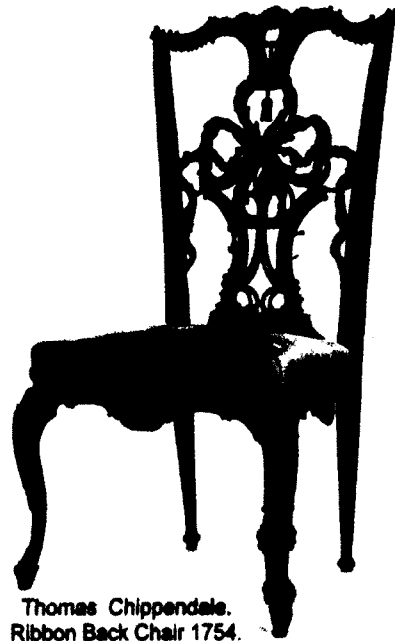
During the 1940s, many of the instructors were African Americans and the majority of them were graduates of Hampton. Instructors, Moses and Livas, taught in the Architecture department which was where the students took the drafting course. According to Mr. Burrell, graduates who worked at Hampton included Billy B. Smith, “you know the fellow with the picture with the ribbon back chair (*figure 35*). He worked in cabinet-making, as a matter of fact, when the trade school was eliminated Billy B, as we used to call him, was here.”²¹⁰



Figure 35, Billy Smith carving a Chippendale Ribbon Back Chair while at Hampton. Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940s.

²¹⁰ Burrell Conversation. Mr. Burrell informed me on April 15, 2009 that Billy Smith had recently died in California.

Figure 36, Below, Original Chippendale Ribbon Back Chair, c. 1754. Although more ornate than what Billy Smith made it can be used as an example for students.



Also, there was a noticeable presence from 1942 to the 50s of European instructors on campus and students enrolled in the Furniture Trades also took their courses:

Wolf was a drafting instructor, he was German. My math teacher, one of them was a Dr. Bestle, he was also German. He went to Princeton. They used to call us Little Yale. Once upon a time, I was told that these people had to take a year.²¹¹

Harold Evans is referring to when educators like Viktor Lowenfeld, came to Hampton in 1939, as assistant professor of Industrial Arts, studio art teacher, and later Chairman of the Art Department, after escaping Nazi Europe. Lowenfeld went on to become famous after leaving Hampton to work at The Pennsylvania State University as professor of Art Education in 1946. Lowenfeld is well known for his “Visual-Haptic theory in Art

²¹¹ Evans Interview, May 2012.

Education which was assimilated from Viennese sources.”²¹² An active leader in the National Art Education Association, one of Lowenfeld’s many publications utilized data he collected while working at Hampton. At that time, a group called Friends of Refugee Teachers aided Lowenfeld and other educators.

Craftsmanship, Materials and Resources

As indicated by *figure 35*, which shows Billy Smith carving his chair, the students were reproducing excellent examples of furniture. The elegance of the Chippendale Ribbon back chair that Billy Smith was making symbolizes a certain amount of prestige for the consumer as was Chippendale’s intent when he designed the chair. One may question if the students had autonomy to design their own pieces of furniture or if they simply copied what they saw in the publications. That they did both is apparent and clearly illustrated by the chair that Mr. Smith made as compared to an example of an original Chippendale Ribbon back. Although the elements of a Chippendale are there, Smith has taken liberty with some of his own design techniques. In the May 1913 *The Southern Workman*, the coursework for cabinetmakers and carpentry students reflect that they had to complete applied mathematics, mechanical drawing, geometry and algebra with one or more courses recommended each year of their program. Additionally,

While the carpenter or cabinetmaker is engaged in learning the technical branches of his work, he also has the opportunity of becoming acquainted with some of the allied trades and of receiving preparation for larger service as a housebuilder and community worker. The extra work includes tinsmithing, woodturning, bricklaying and plastering. He also spends four hours each week in the drafting room....Under the heading of

²¹² Wikipedia, for more information on Lowenfeld, see *The Lowenfeld Lectures: Viktor Lowenfeld on Art Education and Therapy*, John A. R. Mitchell and for more on his contribution to Hampton Institute’s art department, see *The Art of John Biggers*, Alvia Wardlaw.

trade mathematics the carpenters and cabinetmakings learn together in the technical carpenter shop the common methods of making calculations involved in trade problems. They are taught to apply the fundamental processes of mathematics to such problems as figuring the amount and cost of materials required for specific pieces of work. Here the aim is quickness and accuracy.²¹³

The examples of Joseph Young's mechanical drawing reflect how important mathematics was to the process of furniture making as noted in *figures 32 and 33*.

My research shows that specific exercises in design and woodworking were given to the students to complete. Although many of the pieces of furniture made in the trade school were replicas from antique books or from magazine articles brought in by the predominantly white consumers, there was still room for creativity. Once they mastered the exercise given or reached a certain level in a class, they had to complete a project. For example, John Hudgens who went through the program with Harold Evans in the 1940s, kept a scrapbook of his years at Hampton that is in the possession of his daughter and contains a photograph of a shelf that he made during that time. The design of this particular shelf was a Chippendale as seen in *figure 37*. The plan for the shelf was purchased from a newspaper for:

He had cut this out, you know you used to be able to send for directions from the paper, and as a matter of fact there's another one in here, he sent for this one. This is what was in the paper when he sent for directions.²¹⁴

The shelf was used as his first year project. The other photographs illustrate other projects, such as Hudgen's project for the Mansion House, as well as some of the steps in training including what happened in the Finishing Room.

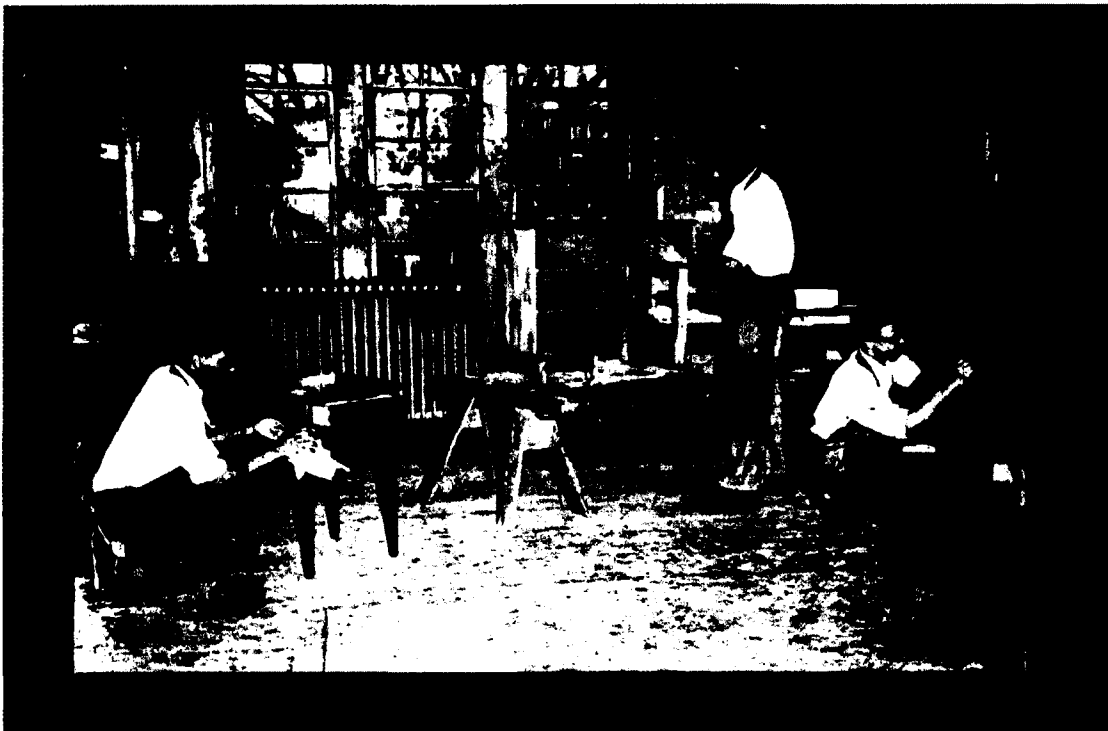
²¹³ *The Southern Workman*, "The Hampton Institute Trade School, Carpentry and Cabinetmaking" (May 1913), 273. See the curriculum appendix for full course of study for cabinetmakers and carpenters in 1913.

²¹⁴ Joyce Hudgens Blair. Interview with author, 2012 March, Hampton.Digital Recorder.



Figure 37, Chippendale Shelf made by John Hudgens, c. 1940s – 50s. Courtesy Joyce Hudgens Blair.

Figure 38, Below, Training in the Finishing Room, c. 1940s – 50s. Courtesy Joyce Hudgens Blair



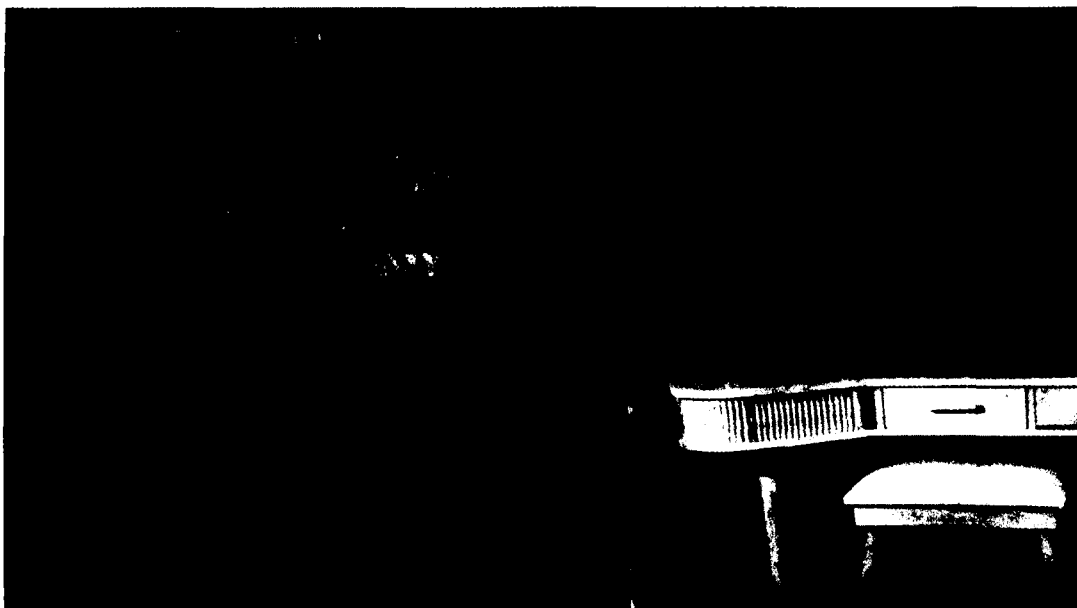


Figure 39, Mansion House Desk made by John Hudgens. Courtesy Joyce Hudgens Blair.

Harold Evans recalled his final project that supports the fact that the students were not only expected to complete copy work:

You had to have a project when you finished and I gave my mother a four poster bed of solid mahogany. I had to borrow Mrs. Bowman's truck so that I could take it to the house.

With this project he was allowed to be creative using the techniques he had learned:

This is the one you had to design yourself....The bed I designed had pineapples on the top-most of this was the same. Instead of having this, mine had sleeves on it with the pineapple sitting on top. Solid mahogany! And, I did all of the turning myself of the legs. Today, we do it differently. Today, they would have cut it in half. In other words, turn this portion and then turn the other portion....You had to draw something to prove what you were trying to do.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ Evans Interview, May 2012.

According to Evans, the bed is still in his family but he was unable to obtain a photograph of it. In order for students to make projects like the book shelf, the desk, and the four poster bed of solid mahogany, they would acquire their materials on campus.

Sometimes, if students could afford to, they would pay for the wood and other times the material was provided. As Joe "Leonard" Young recalls, "There was a man named Mr. Minkins who was in charge of that operation. When the cabinet-making shop or the Carpentry shop needed lumber all they had to do was to take a wagon to the shed and indicate their needs to Mr. Minkins. Each shop kept a supply of lumber on hand."

Young further explains the types of woods that were most commonly used, noting how:

Hampton Institute had a vast supply of lumber and hard woods much of which came by ship and unloaded and placed in storage sheds behind the James and Pierce Hall dormitories where it would dry over many months and years. Most of the woods came from central and south America... We had all kinds of wood, such as, white pine, yellow pine, poplar, cypress, oak, chestnut, maple, walnut and mahogany.²¹⁶

²¹⁶ Leonard J. Young, Sr. letter to the author, entitled, "The Vast Supply of Lumber and Hard Woods Stored by Hampton Institute during the 1930s and 1940s," June 6, 2006.

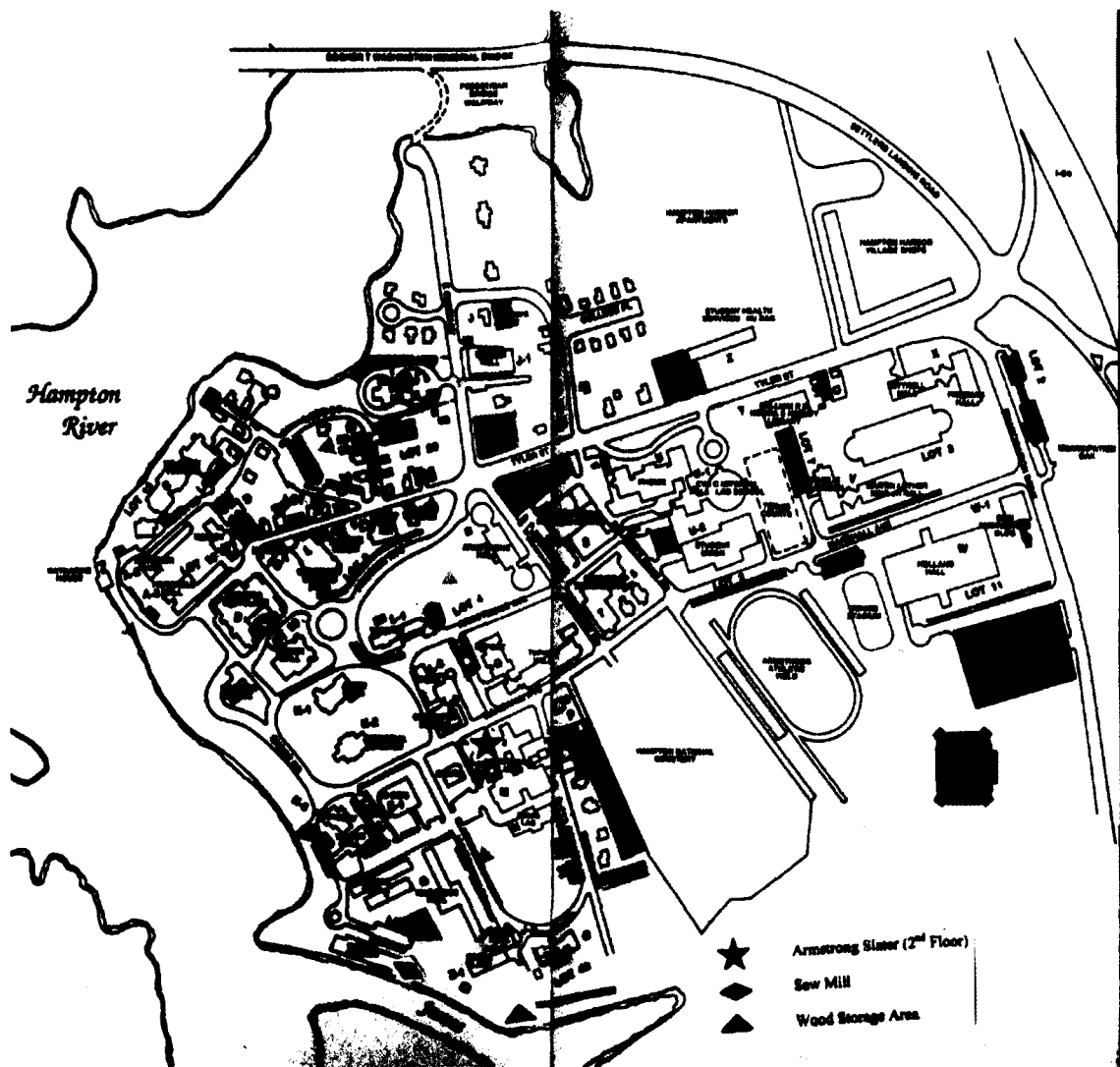


Figure 40, Current map of Hampton University Campus that reflects the location of the circa 1940s saw mill, the area where the wood was stored and the location of the Furniture Trades Department which was located on the second floor of the Armstrong Slater Building.

Young explains the process of seasoning the wood or properly drying the wood before use. Also, the type of wood that Young remembers acquiring from Mr. Minkins reflects that Hampton was purchasing the best wood for furniture making such as the maple, walnut, oak and of course mahogany. The interior drawer of the replica Washington desk is another good example of the different woods that the students used in constructing some of the furniture (*figure 41*). When looking at this drawer, the outside frame is made of tiger maple, which with its “rich

coloring, is considered one of the choicest furniture woods, and certain types of the early reproduction made from it are most attractive”²¹⁷ according to cabinetmaking instructor James Adams in his 1947 Master thesis. The interior of the drawer is poplar which is good for the interior of structures that will not need to hold a lot of heavy items because it is not the wood to support a lot of weight. The top of the desk is mahogany and the banding around the drawer is mahogany which is used often in furniture made at Hampton. This imported wood fits Young’s memory that much of the wood they used came from South America. Young also mentions that they also used walnut, which is a wood that “combines moderate weight with maximum strength, seasons well and works well with carving, in addition to having a rich brown color.”²¹⁸



Figure 41, Interior of the George Washington Desk Drawer

²¹⁷ Adams, “A Technical Manual,” 20.

²¹⁸ Adams, “A Technical Manual,” 18.

Expenses to purchase the materials, the tools, and the library for the cabinetmakers were great. The school purchased the best wood, tools, and equipment available to make the furniture listed below in a report from the Furniture Trades department. It includes a break-down of equipment and supplies for Cabinet-making and the upholstery departments around 1940.

Table 3

CABINETMAKING DEPARTMENT						
TRADE OPERATIONS	AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT	HOURS REQUIRED EACH YEAR				TOTAL HOURS
		First	Second	Third	Fourth	
Use and care of hand and machine tools.	Hand tools essential for cabinet-work.					
	1 - Heavy Duty Delta 10" Circle Saw	150	96	136	102	484
	1 - Delta Grinder					
Kinds of Joints and their proper uses.	1 - 12" Heavy Pay & Egan Joiner					
	Delta Heavy Duty Drill Press					
	Mortise Attachment.					
	1 - Heavy Duty Pay & Egan Tenoner					
	1 - Heavy Duty Pay & Egan Mortiser	68				68
Kinds and Types of Glues	3 - Electric Pots					
	4 - Gas heated Water Pots					
	Best grade of Hide and casiene glue					
Clamping	2 doz. Bar Clamps					
	2 Specialty Chair clamps					
	2 doz. Bar Chair Clamps					
	2 doz. Iron Short Screw Clamps	120	34	34		188
Kinds and Selection of proper woods for all jobs	Dry Kiln					
	Large Supply of Cabinet Hardwoods	68		34		102
Repair and Restore Antiques	1 - 14" Delta Band Saw	68	472	227		767
	1 - 20" Monarch Band Saw					
Woodturning Spindle and Faceplate	1 - Pay & Egan 6' Lathe					
	1 - Pay & Egan 3'					
	1 - Delta 3' Heavy Duty Lathe	102	68	68		238
Surface Decoration	1 - Heavy Duty Delta Scroll Saw					
Inlaying	Carving Tools					
Simple Carving	All types of Inlay and Hardware	170	62	68	170	470
Application of Hardware						
Veneering Methods - Kinds	1 Veneer Press					
Conditions	1 " Steam Plate		68	68	34	170

CABINET AND UPHOLSTERY DEPARTMENT - 1

CABINETMAKING DEPARTMENT (continued)

TRADE OPERATIONS	AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT	HOURS REQUIRED EACH YEAR				TOTAL HOURS
		First	Second	Third	Fourth	
Reproduction of antiques	1 Pay & Span 24" Planer 1 1st Lighting Joiner 1 Delta Joiner 1 Delta Shaper 1 Pay Span heavy shaper		444	372	306	1022
Estimating--Costs, Time, Material	Glassroom, sample materials	34	34	136	170	374
History of Furniture and the Art Periods	Assortment of best books in Library "Furniture Treasury" Wallace Nutting		34	34	68	136
Designing	Library for Research Designs by Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton			136	136	272
Trade Theory	Glassroom, blackboards, Library	102	34	68		204
Drafting	Structural Drafting Department	136				136
Elements of Drafting		136	272			367
Trade Drafting						
Furniture details and period pieces						
Development of Business and Instructional traits	Business men and instructors available for conferences and lectures		34	34	170	238
Related Trade Work	Upholstering Department Woodfinishing Department		68		136	204
Upholstering			68		34	102
Woodfinishing		1152	1768	1312	1268	5500

CABINETMAKING - 2

UPHOLSTERING

TRADE OPERATIONS	AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT	HOURS REQUIRED EACH YEAR				TOTAL HOURS
		First	Second	Third	Fourth	
Recovering	Hand tools Singer Power Machines	186	180	180		446
Repairing Cabinet work		186	180	180		446
Making cushions, mattresses, bedding, box springs	Power picker Cushion filler and above	93	100	180		313
Slip Covers Draperies	Singer Power Machines Drapery board, hand tools, etc.	75	100	146		321
Cane work Rush - Raffia	Adequate hand tools		40	60		100
Advanced Upholstering	Textbooks and Direct contact with furniture of all kinds		696	146		842
Tufting	Drafting tools, hand tools, etc.					
Design						
Market Values, Estimating	Textbooks and direct contact			180		180
Selling	Power Machines		40	30		70
Amings						
Sailmaking						
Canvas work						
Trade Theory	Adequate classroom facilities	180	216	144		540
Drafting	Structural Drafting Department	136				136
Related Trade Work	Cabinetmaking Department Woodfinishing Department	183	183	183		459
Cabinetmaking		183	183	183		459
Woodfinishing		1152	1768	1314		4234

UPHOLSTERING

This chart also illustrates the type of tools that were available to students to use and the training that they received in various methods of woodworking. Hampton also provided other resources like publications in the Trade School Library which contained antique furniture examples, information on industrial education, and other subjects that related to the trades. Many of the books are still found today in the Harvey Library among the stacks and are identified with a stamp that indicates that they came from the Trade School Library. For example:

- *Reconstruction of Industrial Arts: Courses with especial reference to Aims and Objectives in Junior High Schools*, David Snedden and William E. Warner. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University: New York, 1927.
- *Selected Furniture Drawing*, William W. Klenke. The Manual Arts Press, Peoria, Illinois, 1930. (chapters include information for general directions for making furniture by machinery including how to use a circular saw.)
- *Problems in Artistic Woodturning*, Earl W. Ensinger, 1926.
- *An Encyclopedia of Antiques*, Harold Lewis Bond, 1937.
- *Art in Industry*, Charles R. Richard, 1922.
- *The Lure of Antiques*, Walter A. Dyer, 1910.
- *The Old Furniture Book*, N. Hudson Moore, 1903.
- *Measured Drawings of Early American Furniture*, Burl N. Osburn, 1926.

Additional books that focused on design were marked for Home Economics or in the earlier days, Industries.

Enrollment

Due to the onset of World War II, the Furniture Trades along with the rest of the Hampton campus was beginning to show signs of stress. Some of the stress on Hampton's campus was reflected in fluctuating enrollment numbers and rising costs to support the Trades. The war not only effected the campus but the nation on a whole. Despite the difficulties of maintaining the cabinet-making and upholstery department, and the fluctuating enrollment rates, the productivity of these departments reveals a different dynamic on the campus. Although there were negative effects like interruption of students' education goals were interrupted because they were drafted and had to leave the campus, on a more positive note students affected by the war were introduced to different experiences and returned or entered Hampton as more mature mentally and physically.

For example, the famous artist John Biggers came to Hampton in 1943 as a plumbing student. However, Viktor Lowenfeld, encouraged Biggers to become an art major. Art historian, Dr. Alvia Wardlaw, fittingly described how World War II affected the campus in her biography of Biggers:

In the autumn of 1942, the war had an abrupt and sobering impact on Hampton Institute. The quiet and contemplative atmosphere of its waterside setting gave way to rush and urgency, as courses were taught year-round to move students through the school as quickly as possible. As the bay at Hampton was given over to preparations for war, the education of black students was suddenly incidental to the purposes of the United States military. When the students were asked to share their accommodations with enlisted men, this disruption was felt almost as a violation.²¹⁹

²¹⁹ Alvia J. Wardlaw, *The Art of John Biggers: View from the Upper Room* (Houston: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., in Association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1995) 32.

One reflection of this “violation” was fluctuation in the numbers of students enrolled. Many Hampton students like John Biggers, and staff members like Reuben Burrell and Joe Young were drafted mainly into the Navy and left the campus for training. However, because Hampton served as a training ground for African American men enlisted in the Navy, some students and staff members were sent back to Hampton to serve their military duty. Although students and teachers moved in and out, at least 214 students could still be accommodated under the Furniture Trades, as it was called at this time.

The impact of World War II brought new men and women to Hampton for the first time. Others returned to Hampton to use the GI Bill. For example, roughly twelve cabinet - making students and eight students were enrolled in upholstery. Between 1939-1940, some of the students enrolled included: Roger Bryan – upholstery, and listed under cabinet-making-- E. B. Cotton, R. N. Henley, C. H. Hubbard, William H. Tayler, Robert L. Britton, Arthur E. Lee, Marie A. Brown, James F. Coley and Robert Knight. The numbers are relatively low compared to the years before the war and compared to the expense it took to operate the Trades.

After World War II, the enrollment reflected the age and maturity of the students. Some of the staff members like Burrell and Young returned to acquire Masters Degrees in Vocational Education.. New students like Harold Evans came to Hampton in 1947 as a high school graduate from Huntington High Shool located in Newport News, Virginia. He was eighteen years old when he enrolled in cabinet-making. John Hudgens also came to Hampton in 1947 but as veteran using his GI Bill funding to attend. Originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, he opted to leave the Navy and enroll in cabinet-making. Hudgens was around 19 years old when he began his studies at Hampton. Harold Evans recalled

that one of their classmates seemed even older, maybe in his forties: “Let’s see, Johnson, Gross, Hudgins, Lowery, they were all veterans [Could not recall name] was almost as old as my daddy because he had put thirty years in the military.”²²⁰ He also recalled that some of his classmates were still getting drafted.

Hampton now saw better prepared students entering from high school, as was the case with Mr. Evans, who graduated with vocational skills in sheet metal, and students coming into college as men, affected by what they experienced as black soldiers.

Hampton was the site of a federal war training program. The program was geared for “young men who had finished high school who came to learn a trade. The various experiences of the student body and the staff transcended into the work produced in the cabinet making department and the sale of the furniture”²²¹ Housed on the second floor of Armstrong-Slater, the Furniture Trades had a large area to work including upholstery classes, furniture refinishing and the display area to sale furniture. Depending on the years, a dozen to twenty-five students could fit into a classroom as indicated by the photographs.

Sale of Furniture

Keeping with tradition, the furniture made at this time was for sale. A showroom was setup in the Armstrong Slater building, the furniture was tagged, sales were advertised, and people came to the campus to buy. Although there was never an official stamp to indicate that the furniture was made at Hampton, students found ways to make pieces their own and some even wrote their names in inconspicuous places. Through my

²²⁰ Harold Evans Interview. May 2012.

²²¹ Vivian Young during a conversation with her husband Leonard J. Young in their home in Delaware.

research, I have not found any kind of markings that indicate that the furniture was made at Hampton. However, I have ascertained that there are instances where “some did... most of them put them in there but the hid them.” It is also suggested that they knew each other’s work “by a little marking or the way he did certain things... some people cut one way and others another way.”²²² This system the men created for identifying each other’s work was fine among them when they were in school, however the only way to identify a Hampton made piece today is by tracing the provenance of the pieces that have been collected by the museum or those still found in homes in the community.

The shop where the furniture was sold was closed due to the impact of the war but through photographs and descriptions of how it worked, much is known about this period:

Oh, we made a tremendous amount of furniture. We had a showroom twice as wide as this room and much longer than these two rooms. We had to make things, chairs, tables and all kinds of cabinets and what not. Then people would come in to buy furniture. And then when the war broke out, in 1945, they made us close the showroom and they emptied the showroom and turned them into offices.²²³

The showroom that Mr. Young described is the area that Mrs. Young was referring to as the offices for the federal training program.

Many European Americans from the community purchased furniture from the Trade School: actually more so than their African American neighbors. Fortunately, the Hampton University Museum acquired four pieces of bedroom furniture that were purchased by a family in the 1940s. Although the gentlemen could not remember the

²²² Evans Interview, May 2012.

²²³ Young Interview.

exact year that the furniture was purchased, he remembered that his father worked in downtown Hampton at the time and came over to the school to select and purchase the items. The pieces were given to him when he started his own family. The couple used the furniture in their daughter's bedroom and was considering selling the pieces in New York when they elected to call the Hampton University Museum after seeing the notice for the furniture exhibition that was on display there.

The colonial revival piece has a wonderful headboard with a broken arch pediment with rosettes carved on the ends. A reeded flame finial is in the center of the arch. The bed post also has the flame finial on the end of the beautifully carved reeded pilasters. The bedrails are made of ash and the center area of the rails is mahogany. The construction and workmanship of all of the pieces create a beautiful and sturdy set. The major wood used in all of the pieces is mahogany as seen is the chest of drawers, *figure 42*. What looks to be a difficult and unique piece among the Hampton Collection is the chest of drawers. The top of the chest of drawers is a flat top with projecting corners which are about $\frac{3}{4}$ semi-circles at each corner. The detailing of the legs other than the reeded pilasters are different from the other pieces of furniture in this set. The top of the legs have rings and then a section is reeded followed by more rings and terminating in a peg. You can also note that the coloration of the drawers is different and I am unable to determine if that occurred in the staining of the piece or in the selection of mahogany that was used. The front of the chest is composed of two small drawers on the top and four very large and deep drawers. There are wooden knobs on the chest and brass key holes on each drawer. The interior of the case of the drawer shows an excellent tongue and groove technique as seen in *figure 43*.

Figure 42



The side table *figure 44* is mahogany and the inside of the drawers are ash similar to the chest, *figure 42*. The table is made with a shelf and also has the reeded pilasters on all four slender legs which is similar to the Sheraton style. The bottom of the chest of drawers and the side table is made with plywood which was a relatively new material in the woodworking industry. “Made from most every kind of wood, plywood is a product of the veneering process. Manufactured in different thicknesses, sizes, number of plies, and grades of lumber, tops, panels, doors, and drawer fronts, of some of the very fine furniture produced were made of five-ply material to prevent warping and shrinking”,²²⁴ according to Adams’ thesis. The knobs on the chest of drawers and the side table are the same. The details of the rails on the side table and on the exterior of the dresser are the

²²⁴ Adams, “A Technical Manual,” 10-11.

same spiral turned half columns which can also be found on top of the mirror that has full sized rosettes on all four corners. The same full size rosettes can also be found on the bed frame.



Figure 43
Detail

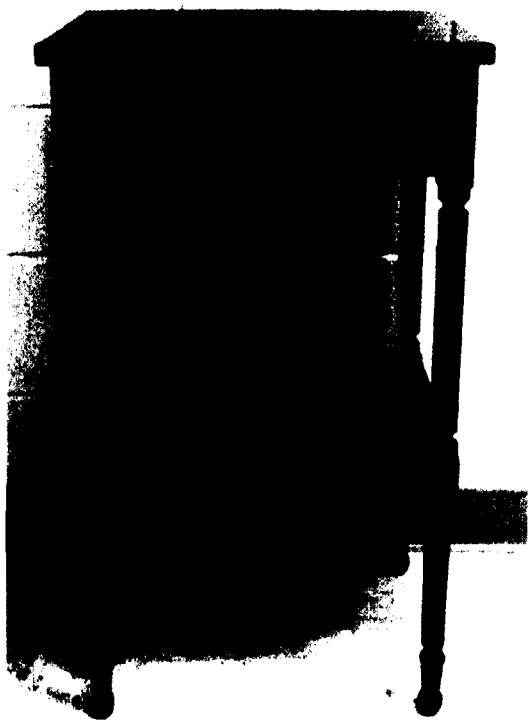


Figure 44, Side Table

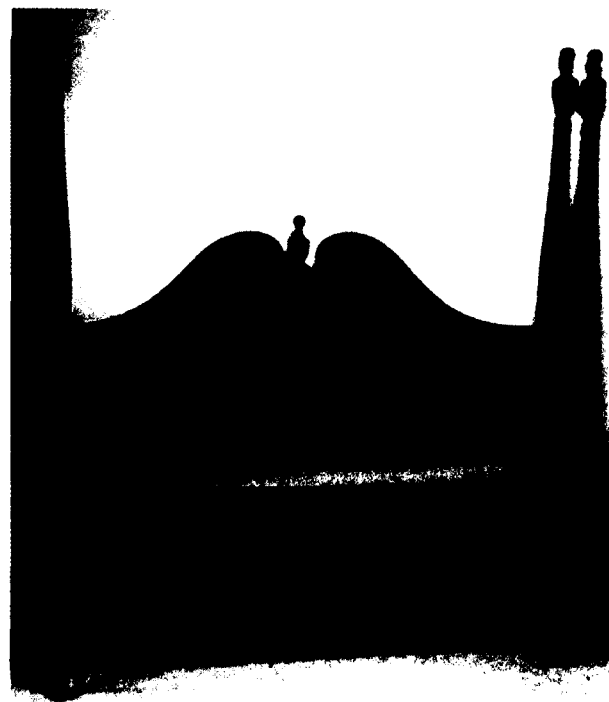


Figure 45, Headboard and Footboard

Interestingly enough there were other furniture stores located in downtown Hampton and in Phoebus but people from these towns still came to the campus to purchase the furniture made there. Some campus staff and some of the older students were able to setup house with pieces of furniture purchased during the sales.

Mary Boener grew up on campus because her father taught business there. Mrs. Boener currently has in her possession a dining room table made on campus as well as a sofa and two chairs. Mrs. Boener was interested in selling the table to Hampton; however we had just accepted into our collection the same dining room table from the estate of a Hampton graduate, and her husband, who was a local attorney, *figures 46 and 47*. The wood in the Boener dining room table has been identified as walnut and the recently donated piece as mahogany. They are constructed exactly alike with the slender tapered legs very much in the Sheraton style. The dining room chairs used by the donor are stained to match the mahogany and the legs are similar to those found in the regency style. Most regency pieces seem to have been made from rosewood; however this set of dining room chairs is mahogany.

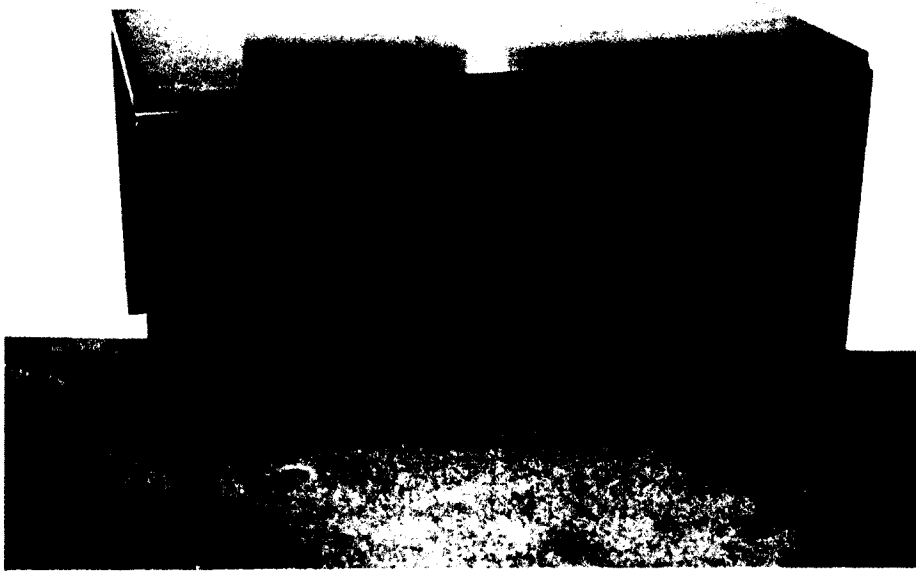


Figure46, Gate Leg Dining Room table donated by Hampton graduate. Table was used in her home. Hampton University Museum Collection.

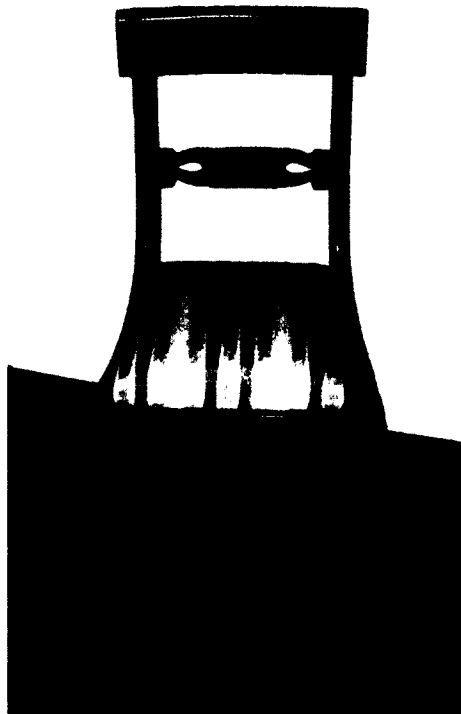


Figure 47, Dining Room Chair used with the dining room table.

Many of the Cabinet-making graduates went on to become proficient at their trade, either working for small cabinet-making organizations or developing their own. Others became vocational educators and worked internationally setting up schools. The Trade School Memorial described in the introduction now commemorates Hampton's initiative to recognize the men and women who used their training to become active contributors to their communities and beyond. These "old-timers" acquired more than just the rudiments of education, they developed the character and the development of the whole person as was General Armstrong's mission.

Chapter 4

Building on Tradition: Collecting, Documentation, Exhibitions and Style

Historical Perspective

This section brings the story of Hamptonfurniture making up to the present. It reflects my personal journey in the development of the Hampton University Museum collection that documents the furniture that came out of the cabinet-making department. Further it details my quest to record the histories of the men and women involved in this department as students, instructors, and graduates.

In preparation for a renovated space for the museum collection, Hampton University Museum director, Jeanne Zeidler decided actively to collect artifacts that pertained to the history of the school, particularly the Trade School programs. One part of her plan included hiring me in 1991 as the associate curator and director of membership and community programs which would position me to develop stronger relationships with Hampton graduates. Because of my previous experience as curator at Penn Center, located on St. Helena Island, where I collected oral histories and worked with Penn School graduates, we thought this would be a perfect fit for me to also begin to collect the stories of Hampton graduates and to lead the staff to the potential objects/artifacts for the collection.

The Hampton University Museum is the oldest African American museum in the nation and the oldest museum in Virginia. Also established in 1868, General Armstrong

wrote to his mother who was still in Hawaii, “to send natural articles, such as coral and lava, from the Pacific. I would prefer that you send what you have to send not in money, but in rare specimens of all kinds”²²⁵ It was his goal to introduce the students coming to Hampton to world culture. The collection included objects like a rare mummified Egyptian artifact as well as the objects from the Pacific Islands. The first African pieces were acquired by the museum in the 1870s. These objects were placed in cabinets in The Curiosity Room, where the pieces were accessible to the students for their use. They were used as hands-on objects, as is illustrated in many photographs in Hampton’s collection. The American Indian Collection began with the arrival of the American Indian students who came to Hampton in 1878. As with the African American students, the teachers visited the communities of the graduates to see how the schools founded under the Hampton model were succeeding. Hampton faculty would return to Hampton with gifts from the various Indian tribes they visited.

The Hampton University Museum is known for having one of the finest African American art collections. Hampton acquired its first piece through a donation by Hampton Board of Trustee member, Robert Ogden, who gave paintings by American artist, Henry O. Tanner:

Although they were both from Philadelphia, Ogden and Tanner met in Paris, France. The prosperous businessman soon became a benefactor and friend to the artist and in May 1894, Tanner accompanied Ogden to the commencement ceremony at Hampton Institute. Tanner’s *The Bagpipe Lesson* (1893) was displayed at the commencement and, on this occasion, Ogden donated Tanner’s *The Lion’s Head* (1892) to the Institute. The fall of the same year Ogden made a gift of Tanner’s *The Banjo Lesson* to Hampton Institute.²²⁶

²²⁵ *Securing Our Legacy Pamphlet*, Hampton University Museum, 2000.

²²⁶ *International Review of African American Art*, vol. 20, No. 1, 5.

The collection was expanded and was housed in various buildings on campus. Museum Curator, Cora Mae Folsom (1903-1922) “lobbied for larger exhibition and storage spaces, using as a model Boston’s art museum.”²²⁷ During World War II, the museum’s collection was boxed and stored, with many pieces shipped to The Virginia Museum of Fine Art for safe keeping. Museum objects were stored for the same reason that the furniture showroom was dismantled: to make room for the military presence on the campus. After the war, the objects were returned to the campus and the museum continued to develop:

By 1970, with the school’s multicultural collections of African, African American, American Indian, Asian, and Pacific art were housed together under the recently renovated, historic landmark Academy Building....Under the leadership of Jeanne Zeidler (museum director, 1980-2001), concerted effort was directed toward making the museum’s multicultural collections accessible to wider and more diverse audiences.²²⁸

Through Zeidler’s initiative to expand the collection and to make it more accessible, several Trade School items were donated or purchased for the Hampton History Collection. These included several types of irons used in the tailoring shop and a miniature hand truck that was made as a model to demonstrate to prospective customers the quality of the product. The hand trucks produced were sold to not only the military but to airports according to sources. Artifacts such as agricultural tools and even wooden hat stands used in the millinery classes young women took in domestic sciences were added to the collection.

²²⁷Hultgren, Mary Lou. “African Art at Hampton,” *International Review of African American Art*, vol. 20, no. 1, 36.

²²⁸Hultgren, “African Art at Hampton,” 40.

Of importance to my work, the museum acquired furniture from community members that was made on campus in the Furniture Trades. Additionally, pieces like the secretary from Mrs. Armstrong (*figure 8* in chapter 3) were located in various buildings on campus and brought to the museum for preservation. Several bedroom suites were donated to the museum and in conjunction with my dissertation they have all been photographed and rehoused in a climate controlled off-site storage unit. One of the first pieces collected was a Victorian style bed acquired from a private estate. The individual that Hampton acquired the bed from worked on the campus for years and the provenance of the bed is cited as from the Mansion House, where the Principals and/or Presidents of Hampton reside. The Mansion House bed consists of a headboard, footboard, and the bed frame all made of mahogany illustrated in Figures 48, 49, and 50. In an effort to identify the style of this bed, I went to the local auction house in Phoebus, Virginia. They were familiar with some of the furniture made in Hampton's Furniture Trades because of one or two estate sales. They praised the bed for its beauty and workmanship and identified the style as Victorian, though not citing any particular style. So I continued my search and learned that, according to the Winterthur Museum website on various furniture manufacturers, pieces like this example were made by the Grand Rapids Furniture Company in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1882 or the Kent Furniture Manufacturing Company also in Grand Rapids, Michigan. As major manufacturers of Colonial revival furniture, these companies had catalogs that circulated throughout the United States, advertising America's need for "conspicuous consumption that was demonstrated in the antiques world particularly in the 1920s. The 1920's also saw the rise to prominence of such large department stores as Wanamaker's, Lord & Taylor,

Jordan Marsh, and Marshall Field. Wanamaker's had offered Colonial Revival pieces as early as 1887 and by the 1920's Wanamaker's was advertising its high-quality Colonial-style furniture with finesse."²²⁹

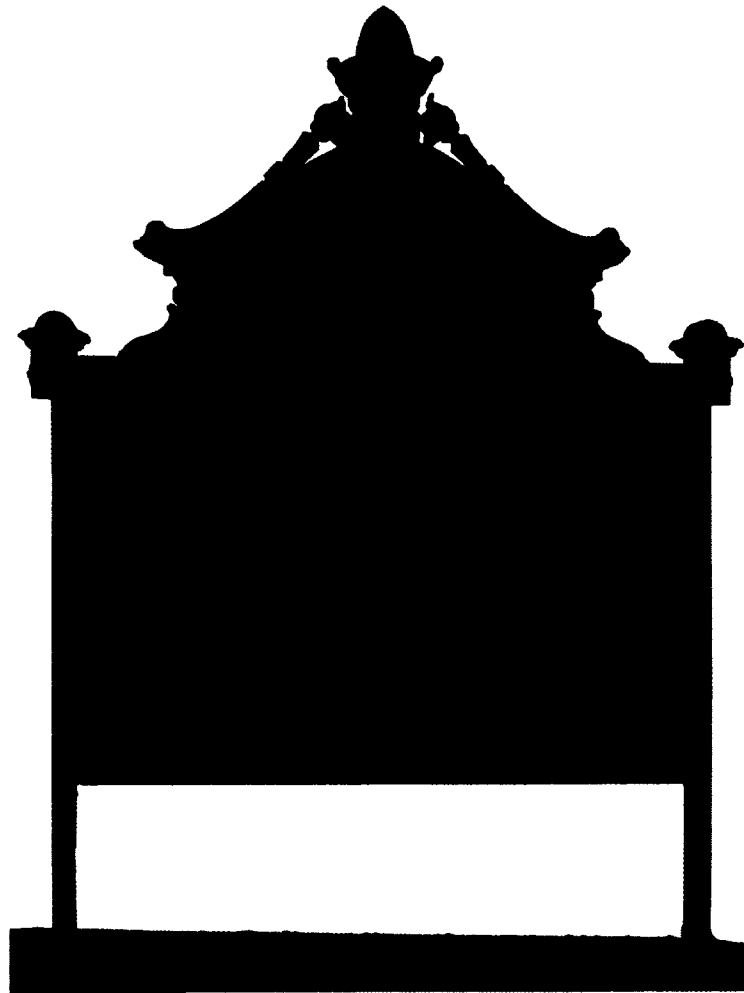


Figure 48 , Victorian Headboard

²²⁹ David P. Lindquist and Caroline C. Warren, *Colonial Revival Furniture with Prices*, (Pennsylvania: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1993), 49-50.

Figure 49 below, Detail of Crest and Figure 50, Victorian Footboard



Hampton's students adapted designs by noted cabinetmakers like Chippendale and with the extensive library that was developed for the Trade they could easily have access to the mail order catalogs that were circulating. Additionally, the style of this bed is very similar to the style of the desk used by Mrs. Armstrong and the style in which the Indian Table was made. The large slats of wood and how they are assembled show consistency in design which is somewhat different than some of the later pieces made in the furniture shop, *figure 51*, back of Indian Table Drawer and *figure 52*, back of Mrs. Armstrong's desk.



Figure 51, Back of Indian Table Drawer

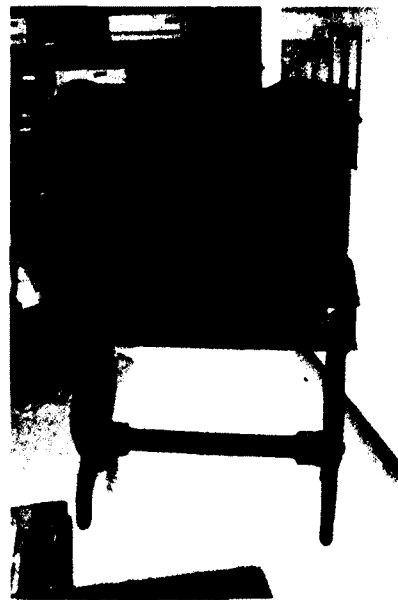


Figure 52, Back of Emma Armstrong's Desk

Special Events and Exhibitions

To encourage more donations of objects related to the history of the school, and to increase the level of commitment to the museum from alumni and the community, special exhibitions and programs were developed. Museum scholar, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill notes that “objects are used to construct identities, on both a personal and a national level. Objects can become invested with deeply held feelings and can symbolize powerful convictions through which life is led.”²³⁰ Museum collections are invested with meanings that can inspire different audiences like the Trade School graduates, who became a target population developing deeper alumnae relationships.

On November 17, 1996, the University Museum celebrated the Centennial Anniversary of the historic Trade School. During this event, a mini exhibition was created entitled *Hampton's Trade School: A Centennial Snapshot*. As curator, I included photographs that came from the Hampton University Archives: some by Frances Benjamin Johnston, members of the Kamera Klub, and those taken by campus

²³⁰ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 109.

photographer Reuben V. Burrell who joined the Camera Club that was established when he was a student at Hampton. This exhibition also included select items from the collection. We held this exhibition in the former museum space, The Academy Building, located in a small gallery outside of the main changing exhibition space. This small exhibition was very well received.

As Mr. Young recollects about the event, many of the trade school graduates returned and participated on a panel recalling their days at Hampton:

On 10 September 1996 I received a telephone call and also a letter informing me that the University Museum would be sponsoring a program on November 17, 1996 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Trade School and that my wife Vivian and I would be invited to spend a three day weekend at the University for this occasion as guest of the university. The Museum was in the process of collecting historical information memorabilia and taped conversations of trade school graduates. Unfortunately, there are only a few graduates still alive but at least this effort was a start in preserving some memories of the trade school.²³¹

The panel discussion was held in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition.

Participants on the panel included James Bell (Brickmasonry and a former Director of Career Planning and Placement at Hampton), Reuben V. Burrell, Tamlin Antoine (Machine Shop Practice, Vocational Instructor for the International Labour Organization), George C. Cooper (Golden Thirteen) and Leonard Joseph Young. The event was filled to capacity and after the panelists spoke we asked for reflections from the audience which included several Trade School graduates. Also in the tradition of the Trade School, we included entertainment for the event. Music was provided by the Crusaders, a musical group organized in 1939 with twelve men. The men in this choir came from all walks of

²³¹Young letter to author.

life including building tradesmen, letter carriers, plumbers, automobile mechanics, accountants, undertakers, laborers, public school teachers and college professors. The Crusaders are reminiscent of the Hampton Singers and the Trade School Singers and still perform today with their oldest member close to 95 years.

Several positive returns resulted from this exhibition and program. For instance, Tamlin Antoine compiled a list of the graduates from the Machine Shop that included their resumes and their work history. This resulted in a better understanding of who went on to use the trade they acquired at Hampton during their careers. Many recollections were shared by the panelists and during the Reflections period, including a story shared by George C. Cooper, the last acting chairperson of the Division of Trades and Industries. Cooper stressed how important the Trade School, particularly the cabinet-making department, was in helping many couples begin to setup their homes. Cooper shared how when he and his wife were first married they “outfitted their home with chairs and a corner cabinet from the trade school,” unlike Joe Young who felt that the furniture was too expensive to purchase when he and his wife married.

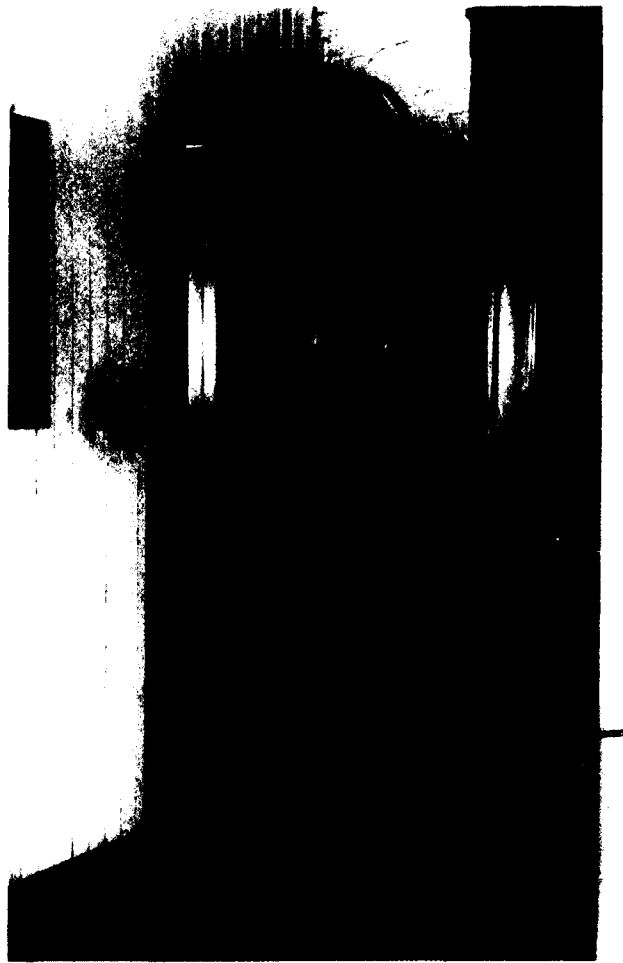


Figure 53, Corner Cabinet that was made in the Trade school. This is similar to the one that the Cooper's purchased. Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1940s.

Relationships with many of the graduates continued after the event because we were in contact fairly often and they knew of my interest in the trade school, particularly the furniture made in the school. More importantly, they were so pleased that someone was interested in hearing their stories. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper wanted to donate the Corner Cabinet that was made at Hampton; however, they were based in Ohio, and after Mr. Cooper died, Mrs. Cooper moved to New York to live with her daughter. We exchanged correspondence, actually, with a neighbor who was speaking for Mrs. Cooper and tried to make arrangements to get the cabinet to Hampton but communication broke down and unfortunately I am not sure if Mrs. Cooper is still alive or not. This unfortunate loss of

contact has resulted in me working more proactively with graduates in establishing wills and letters of agreement with the museum.

Another important result of this weekend of celebration included formal recorded interviews. I supervised the interviews conducted by graduate students enrolled in the now defunct Museum Studies program. Four students interviewed roughly twenty men and the materials are housed in the museum.

History and memory are important to the survival of a culture. However, objects on display give also added meaning to the role of public history. The City of Hampton has made an effort to support the history of the community and to collect stories and artifacts as well. One event that they began and the museum has participated in is The Hunt for Hampton History. Normally held at the Hampton Convention Center or the Hampton History Museum located downtown, the first two years generated a lot of traffic and interest. I have found participating in this event helpful in gathering information on the Trade School. On the occasions that I attended, my small exhibitions included showing some of Reuben V. Burrell's photographs. It encouraged people from all races and walks of life to share a story about Hampton Institute and how it impacted them as children growing up in this area. Another milestone in acknowledging the history of The Trade School came in 2006 when the University dedicated the Trade School Monument on the grounds of the Armstrong-Slater Trade School. This aided in the museum documenting and collecting more materials for the collection.

In 2007, the State of Virginia celebrated the centennial of the Jamestown Exposition that occurred in 1907. I served on the committee organized by the City of Hampton to commemorate this event. In response to the expected celebration, I curated a

furniture exhibition, *The Jamestown Exhibition, Hampton Institute and the Gilded Age: African American Furniture Making in Virginia*, to acknowledge Hampton's Trade School's participation in the 1907 Exposition.



Figure54, Hampton University Museum, Greg Adams, Photographer, 2007.

Figure 55, Hampton University Museum, Greg Adams, Photographer, 2007.



We garnered huge results with this exhibition and I am finding that on such occasions we receive telephone calls, emails and museum visitors who want to share a story about their experience with the school or would like to donate or sell an object that reflects this history. Overwhelmingly, the sentiment of our callers was that the materials should be returned to Hampton. During the Jamestown Exhibition, which was our most recent and largest exhibition that focused on the furniture made at Hampton, one unfortunate story was shared from a Euro-American visitor to the museum. She was so upset that her church had just “gotten rid” of a pew that was made at Hampton. She indicated that her husband was very angry with the church because he felt that they should have contacted the school to see if the university would like it back. She thought

that there was a photograph of the pew but unfortunately we were unable to reconnect to at least obtain a photograph. This type of exchange showing such passion for a part of the past is more reason to develop exhibitions like the Jamestown exhibition. Without such opportunities to reintroduce these items to the community and alumni more of Hampton's history would otherwise go unnoticed and could be potentially destroyed.

People experience objects in different ways during their visits to museums. They provoke memories for, "personal experiences can be encoded in artifacts, so that the object represents the memory, the significance and the emotional power of those experiences. Objects can therefore be used to express a sense of self and a feeling of cultural affiliation."²³² The relationship with Joseph Leonard Young was developed over a period of time, from 1996 through 2007. Because of the invitation to participate in the celebration of the Trade School Anniversary and the relationship we developed through the years we had materials to pull from for the exhibition. Young's donation of blueprints he drew as a student was used in the exhibition panel as an illustration of the process the students went through along with the photographs from Burrell. For example, the blueprint of the Colonial Acorn Bed and the photograph were used in the exhibition; *figures 56 and 57.*

²³²Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, 10.

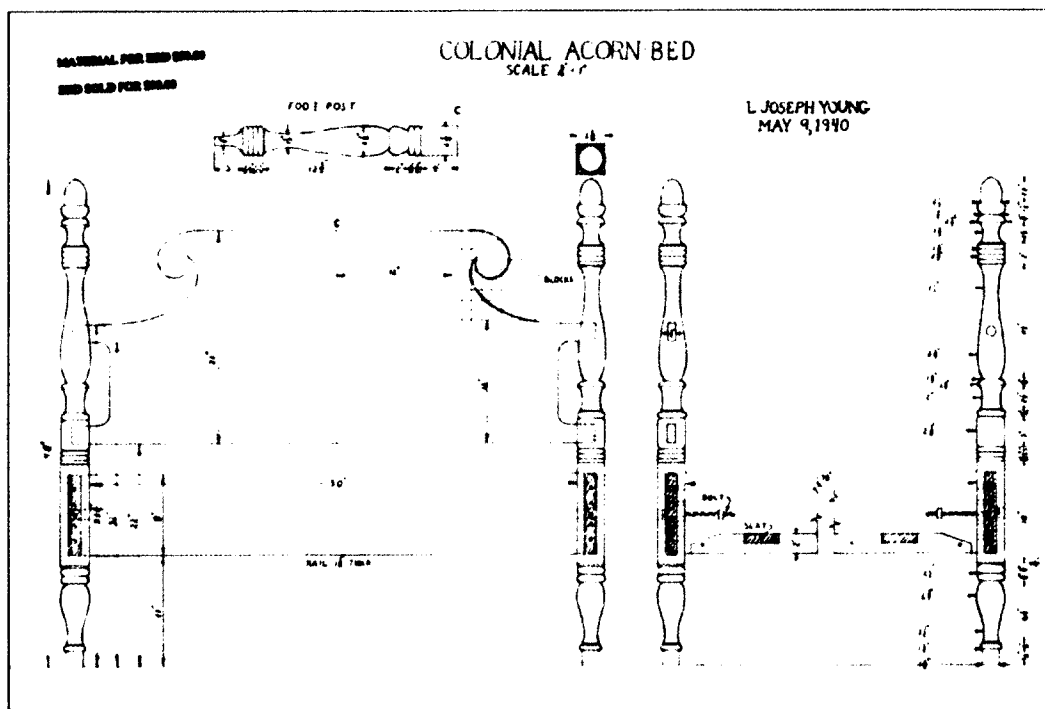


Figure 56, Colonial Acorn Bed, Leonard "Joe" Young, May 9, 1940, Hampton University Museum



Figure 57, Colonial Revival Low post Bed set-up at Open House, Reuben V. Burrell, photographer, c. 1950s



Figure 58, above, Mahogany Tilt Top Table made by Charles William Lowery. Greg Adams, photographer. Tools used by Lowery throughout his career. Richard Ward, photographer. The Tilt Top Table was built between 1950 and 1960, 44" h x 23" w. x 22"d., Washington, D. C., Collection of the Lowery Family.

Additionally, we were able to borrow furniture from the family of a Furniture Trades graduate, Charles William Lowery, who was shown in the 1940s photograph with instructor, Mayme Bowman. Lowery was deceased when we contacted his family in Washington, D. C. His daughter, the registrar at the Anacostia Museum in Washington, D.C. shared that her father had graduated from Hampton and made furniture throughout his career. We further discovered that he had participated in the earlier 1996 anniversary program and that he is included in the photographs with Harold Evans and John Hudgens. After assuring his wife, Della Lowery that we would take great care of her husband's furniture that we borrowed for the exhibition, as well as a set of his carving tools, we were able to include a part of his legacy in the exhibition. During the opening event,

Mrs. Lowery and their three children and grandchildren came and saw his tilt top table on exhibition and his tools given more meaning. Della Lowery also shared her memories of her husband's days at Hampton and his life as a cabinetmaker in Washington, D. C.

The George Washington Replica desk that was possibly made by instructor, James Adams as discussed in Chapter Three was also used in the exhibition. We also displayed a mahogany Sewing Table that Reuben V. Burrell made in the late 1950s for a friend who donated it to the museum. To further articulate the theme of the African American middle-class we also exhibited a mahogany sitting room set that consisted of a settee, and two arm chairs. Although this family was not affiliated with Hampton the donation helps to illustrate the rise of the middle-class African American home and the materials found within them.

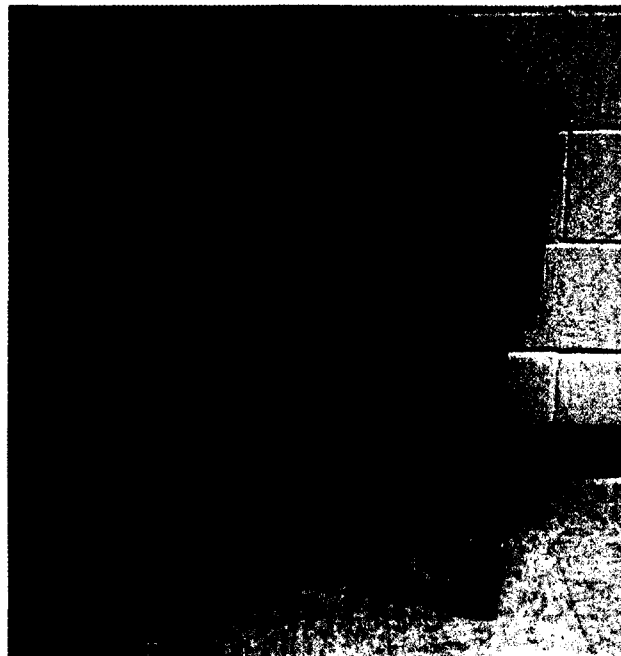


Figure 59, Mahogany Sewing Table made by Reuben V. Burrell, c. 1960, Hampton, Virginia. Hampton University Museum Collection, Crystal Johnson, photographer

Donations of Furniture

The set mentioned above included two rocking chairs, a settee and two straight chaired carved from red mahogany in a Queen Ann style was donated to the museum in 2002. The family owned the furniture from around 1904 or 1905. Carved from “red mahogany” some of the pieces had been reupholstered and refinished.

A wonderful result of the Jamestown Exhibition was the donation in 2011 of a dining room set from the estate of a Hampton graduate. Reuben Burrell and I visited the donor in 2007 when I was seeking pieces to include in the furniture exhibition. We were seeking use of a sewing table that Burrell had made for her. She agreed to lend the table and actually donated it to the museum at that time. She and Mr. Burrell visited for a while, discussing their days at Hampton and her family as I marveled at the dining room set that was in her living room. Before we left her home, the donor promised that she would leave the dining room set in her Will to the museum. I received a call in September 2011 letting me know that the family was adhering to her wish and that I needed to make preparations to pick up the dining room set. As discussed in Chapter Three this dining room set is very similar to the one that a prospective donor who grew up on Hampton’s campus wanted the museum to acquire.

Because the Jamestown exhibition had such a long run on exhibition from February through July 2007, the museum also received the bedroom suite as mentioned in Chapter Three. In 2008, I received the call concerning the donation and after checking

with the director it was determined that I should go to the home to evaluate the furniture. I took Mr. Burrell who is very familiar with the cabinet-making department.

When we arrived at the home we were taken downstairs to a bedroom where the set was placed. There Mr. Burrell looked at the head and foot board carefully. He then looked inside the drawer and noted the fine tongue and groove work inside the drawer. Burrell photographed the furniture and confirmed that it was Trade School material. It was really important to take him on this visit because even though the donors had the provenance for the piece we still had the issue of no notable signature or imprint stating it was made in the Trade School.

The donors wanted the furniture appraised and when they asked me who could appraise the proposed donation I recalled that I had been told that a few pieces of furniture made on Hampton's campus had been auctioned off at the Phoebus Auction House located in Phoebus, Virginia. I contacted them to see if they might be able to appraise the furniture. The only other person that I knew of who might have been able to help with the appraisal was the furniture conservator that I used to conserve pieces of furniture donated to Hampton earlier. He was familiar with Hampton made objects because he had restored the mahogany sewing table that Burrell made as well as the tilt top table made by Charles Lowery for the 2007 exhibition. The process for establishing the value of Hampton made furniture was interesting because there had not been a monetary value placed on the furniture since the sale of furniture ended in the 1950s.

After my initial contact with the appraiser the donors contacted him. By this time, the furniture was already in the museum's possession so we scheduled an appointment for the appraiser to come to the museum to see the furniture. The appraiser was

impressed with the quality and the workmanship. The donors had kept the furniture in wonderful condition. However before he could place a final value on the suite, the issue of the maker came up again. At this point, I had another conversation with Burrell asking him if the furniture was signed and to tell me about the cabinet-making shop and how it functioned as far as selling the pieces. During my inquiry, I asked him to tell me why there was no HNAI stamp anywhere on the furniture or any type of indication that it was made at Hampton. I wanted to know if it was not encouraged. His response is substantiated by the later conversation with Harold Evans, "that sometimes fellows would put their name on the bottom of a drawer or something like that," but there was no standardized stamp. I also looked in the Hampton University Archives Trade School Collection and *The Southern Workman* to see if there was any indication why furniture products were not signed. This question remains unanswered.

Mr. Burrell's history with the cabinet-making department and personal experience of cabinet-making were extremely helpful throughout this research. Although he graduated from Hampton with a diploma in the diesel mechanics trade, his chosen trade was cabinet-making in his Washington D.C. high school. Therefore he was familiar with the various types of wood used, the craftsmanship and design elements taught, and how the department functioned as a whole. Thus, he was able to submit a written statement evaluating the donation. The appraiser set a value of \$3000 based on the current economic climate. He said that all antique furniture sales were at a low at this time and the appraisal value was less than it would have been when the market was stronger. I was excited that a monetary value was established. The Colonial style bedroom set

included a full-size bed, a head board, foot board, chest of drawers, mirror and a night table.

Style and Classification of furniture in Hampton's Collections

Stylistically, the majority of the furniture in the Hampton University Museum collection fit into the Colonial Revival period which covers “furniture made in America between 1870 and 1940 that copies seventeenth-and eighteenth-century American styles.”²³³

Colonial Revival styles include “Jacobean, William and Mary, Queen Anne, Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and American Empire.”²³⁴ The furniture included in the index of the museum’s collection mainly represent Chippendale, Sheraton, Hepplewhite, and Queen Anne styles based on the characteristics in the abbreviated compilation found in Helen Comstock’s, *American Furniture: Complete Guide to Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and early Nineteenth Century Styles*:

Table 4: Jacobean-William and Mary, 1640-1720

Distinctive Forms

Jacobean

Arcaded chest; book box (bible box, desk box); Brewster chair, Carver chair; court cupboard, press cupboard; slat-back chair; stretcher table; upholstered (Cromwellian) chair; wainscot chair.

William and Mary

Banister-back chair; butterfly able; cane chair; daybed; desk-on-frame; dressing table (lowboy) easy chair; fall-front desk; gateleg table; high chest (highboy); mixing table, splay-leg table; tavern table; tall-back chair.

Principal Woods for Jacobean

Oak, pine.

William and Mary

Walnut, maple.

Decorative Techniques for Jacobean

Carving, ebonizing, inlay (rare), painting, turning.

²³³ Lindquist and Warren. *Colonial Revival Furniture*, 1.

²³⁴ Lindquist and Warren. *Colonial Revival Furniture*, 1.

William and Mary
Inlay, japanning (advertised in Boston, 1712), painting, turning, veneering

Design for Jacobean

Applied bosses and spindles
Arcaded panels
Ball turnings
Bulbous supports of baluster form
Geometric panels

William and Mary

Arched Skirt (apron) formed of cyma (ogee) scrolls
Fielded panels
Flemish scroll
Trumpet turning and variations
Vase-turning

Source: Helen Comstock, *American Furniture*, 22.

Table 5: Queen Anne, 1720-1755

New Forms

Card table with folding top; corner cupboard; side chair with vase-shaped splat; tea table with dished-top and cabriole leg.

Principal Woods

Walnut, maple, cherry, mahogany, (C. 1750)

Decorative Techniques

Carving, inlay, painting, japanning, veneering.

Design

Arched panel on doors
Broken-scroll pediment on case pieces
Cabriole leg
Hoop-back (yoke-back) on chairs
Pad foot and variations, slipper, web, and trifold
Vase-shaped splat on chairs

Source: Helen Comstock, *American Furniture*, 82.

Table 6: Chippendale, 1775-1790

New Forms

Breakfast bookcase; blockfront chest of drawers; knee-hole chest of drawers; serpentine-back sofa; kettle stand; china table; Pembroke table.

Principal Woods

Mahogany: Santo Domingan: dark, heavy, close-grained. Cuban: close grained, brown in color; did not darken; finely figured.
Honduras (baywood, from Bay of Honduras): open grain; crotch wood of best quality used for veneering; inferior quality, reddish, used for drawer linings.
Walnut; maple; cherry

Decorative Techniques

Carving, parcel gilding, veneering.

Design

Chairs have pierced splat and bowed cresting, with cabriole leg ending in claw-and-ball foot
Marlborough leg, about 1770, may be plain or with block
Carved shell continues an important motif

Source: Helen Comstock, *American Furniture*, 134.

Table 7: Classical Period: 1790-1830

New Forms

Hepplewhite, Sheraton styles: semicircular commode; dressing chest of drawers with attached mirror; tambour desk; convex mirror; sideboard; sectional dining table; work table. Empire Style: *klismos* (or Greek) chair; curule chair (Roman) with cross-base; Grecian couch; "sleigh" bed. Late Empire Style: cornucopia-arm sofa; wardrobe.

Principal Woods

Hepplewhite, Sheraton styles: mahogany, satinwood, bird's-eye maple.
Empire Style: mahogany, rosewood
Late Empire Style: mahogany, rosewood.

Decorative Techniques

Early Federal, 1790-1810

Hepplewhite, Sheraton styles; carving; inlay; eglomise panels; painting, japanning, tambour construction, veneering.

Mid-Federal, 1810-1820

Empire Style: carving; caning; ormololu mounts; painting, gilding, stenciling
(c. 1815)

Late-Federal, 1820-1830

Late Empire style: carving, stenciling; graining

Design

Early Federal, 1790-1810

Hepplewhite, Sheraton styles:

Hepplewhite square, tapering leg

Sheraton turned, reeded leg

Chairs: Shield-back, Heart-back, Oval-back, Square-back

Adamsesque urn

Bellflower

Colonnets on case pieces

Eagle inlay

Feather motif

Wheat-ears

Mid Federal, 1810-1820

Empire Style:

Lyre back

Cross-base (curule) support

Winged Supports

Late Federal, 1820-1830

Late Empire Style

Columns supporting projecting top
Exaggerated cornucopia motif

Source: Helen Comstock, *American Furniture*, 210.

Table 8: Early Victorian, 1830-1870

New Forms

Balloon-back chair, etagere, single-end sofa.

Principal Woods and Other Materials

Rosewood, mahogany, black walnut, iron, brass, papier-mache.

Decorative Techniques

Carving, painting, stenciling, japanning (occasional), laminating (although structural, this contributed to decorative effect), veneering of entire surface for costly appearance.

Design

Victorian classical, 1830-1850

Heavy lion's-paw foot and leaf bracket

Large spirals

Gothic, 1839-1860

Arched panels

Fretwork tracery

Rococo, 1850-1870

Cabriole leg

Convex rear leg

Serpentine forms

Swags of roses and grapes

Saltire stretcher

Renaissance, 1859-1870

Crest enclosing cartouche

Consoles

Tapering baluster leg

Carved busts

Elizabethan, 1840-1860

Spiral twist turnings

Spool turnings²³⁵

Source: Helen Comstock, *American Furniture*, 311.

²³⁵Helen Comstock's, *American Furniture: Complete Guide to Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and early Nineteenth Century Styles*(New York: The Viking Press, 1962), 22, 82, 134, 210, 311. The chart comes from the following pages in an effort to reflect the styles and periods of furniture reproduced at Hampton in the Furniture Trades.

Hampton began making pieces of furniture during the time frame in which Colonial Revival furniture was at its height of popularity, for:

Although Colonial-style reproductions are still being made today, we chose to end our coverage at 1940. The creativity of the Colonial Revival movement had reached its peak during the 1920s, and the 1930s saw few new developments in terms of style. In the 1930s Colonial Revival furniture became more predictable, often copying specific museum pieces. There were larger numbers of accurate reproductions, but the interesting developments in Colonial Revival furniture had faded by the beginning of World War II.²³⁶

As noted earlier, the books in the Trade school library suggest that the students were trained to produce the different styles that clients requested. The photograph from John Hudgens scrapbook illustrates how enamored the general population was with all things antique even as late as the 1940s. Hudgens made the Chippendale shelf from plans he acquired through the newspaper.

Produced and sale of Colonial-style reproductions at Hampton was an unusual feature of a school for Southern blacks since there were already many small cabinetmaking shops and even large factories in the business of producing reproductions of antiques. According to David P. Linquist and Carolyn C. Warren, “in the middle of the nineteenth century, the popular furniture styles in America were Renaissance Revival, Rococo Revival, and Eastlake.” At the same time, a small segment of the population began to take an interest in antique furniture. Only as antiques became more popular did reproductions begin to appear in order

²³⁶Linquist and Warren, *Colonial Revival*, 1.

to meet public demand for the tastes of the past.”²³⁷ Significantly, the writers assert that the:

interest in Colonial Revival reached a fever pitch in the 1920s with a series of important exhibits and the beginnings of the historic preservation movement, with the efforts of the Rockefellers in Williamsburg, Virginia, the du Pont family at Winterthur, near Wilmington, Delaware, and Henry Ford at Greenfield Village, in Dearborn, Michigan.²³⁸

Thus Hampton’s location in proximity to Williamsburg may well have contributed to the direction that furniture making took. For many residents, mainly whites, of the Peninsula to obtain antique reproductions they went to the campus of Hampton. Only after students were close to graduating or had left Hampton were they able to afford the furniture made on campus. As noted on one of Leonard Joe Young’s mechanical drawings of the furniture, the materials costs \$40.00 and the furniture was sold for \$90.00.

Before Colonial Williamsburg came on the scene, it seems that Hampton was one of the few places on the peninsula where patrons could acquire this style of furniture. Not that Virginia did not have other producers of Colonial-style furniture: for there were additional furniture producers in Richmond, Virginia, at least “in the first half of the twentieth century.” For example, Biggs Furniture Company as well as H. C. Valentine and Company both produced “high quality bench-made reproductions in the 1930s.”²³⁹

²³⁷ Linquist and Warren, *Colonial Revival*, 16.

²³⁸ Warren and Linquist, *Colonial Revival*, 16. In 1922 the Metropolitan Museum held an exhibition of Duncan Phyfe furniture. In the same year, the journal, *Magazine Antiques* was founded as noted on page 47 of Warren and Linquist’s book.

²³⁹ Warren and Linquist, *Colonial Revival*, 71-72.

Hampton selling furniture was not only a convenience for the local community but it was of high quality. Reuben Burrell recalls that as a part of the training in the furniture trades department, students were taken on trips to Colonial Williamsburg's museum and allowed to have behind-the-scenes access and examination of the furniture. Linquist and Warren state in their publication about purchasing good colonial-style revival furniture today, that buyers look for the names of makers who studied the originals and they will find the best made pieces. They gave the example of well-known producers of furniture, including Wallace Nutting, the "Inventor" of reproductions who thoroughly examined originals before making his:

The best pieces produced throughout the Colonial Revival period tended to be made in small shops by workers who either had access to originals to study and copy or who had benefited from some of the scholarship on American antiques published during the 1890s. A few small shops were making fairly faithful copies of Colonial designs in the 1880s and 1890s: for example, Meier and Hagen as well as Sypher & Company of New York City, and Potthast Brothers in Baltimore. However, small shops were also making good handmade reproductions in the 1920s and 1930s, such as Margolis of Hartford, Connecticut, and Wallace Nutting of Framingham, Massachusetts.²⁴⁰

Wallace Nutting became a household name when he changed careers from a minister and began to recreate old America through painting and making reproductions of antique furniture. He also assisted Berea College in Kentucky with establishing furniture trades at their school. He was extremely successful and had one of the major Colonial Revival shops.

²⁴⁰Linquist and Warren, *Colonial Revival*, 15-16.

Although the major furniture producers were in Midwestern cities like Cincinnati, Illinois and Grand Rapids, Michigan, the South had a small presence relative to the larger and more active furniture centers:

The Southern furniture industry had been in existence from the 1880s, soon after the Civil War and Reconstruction, making inexpensive furniture for Southerners recovering from the economic deprivations of war. Furniture factories in North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and Tennessee were locally owned, and produced furniture largely for the local population. It was not marketed widely. However, the South had abundant lumber and cheap labor: fine potential for a successful furniture industry.²⁴¹

The quality of Hampton made pieces is also reflected in the fact that the work was done with both machinery and hand-carving. All of the furniture centers mentioned could meet the demands of the public because of the use of machines. However, Linquist and Warren indicated that some of the best producers utilized hand-carving as well:

Machines allowed workers to take shortcuts and produce furniture more quickly, but they could not replicate hand-carving. Mechanization had the greatest impact on the methods of furniture making that were already inexpensive. ... Since the early nineteenth century, furniture manufacturers used circular saws for cutting boards and machines to plane and sand the boards, make mortise-and-ten joints, and mass-produce dowels. Workers experimented with machines to cut dovetails and pins, the most successful being the rotary, or gang, dovetailer. ... Most of the woodworking machines in use at the end of the nineteenth century had limitations, one being that the end product was obviously machine made. When producing Colonial Revival furniture, these machines could not duplicate the fine work or hand carving of early American craftsmen. Machines could produce only adaptations.²⁴²

²⁴¹Linquist and Warren, *Colonial Revival*, 69; Wintheur Internet site.

²⁴²Linquist and Warren, *Colonial Revival*, 36-37.

Harold Evans shared how John Adams instructed them how to use the hand tools and how he was an excellent craftsman himself.

Also in the Hampton University Museum collection are a few examples of Victorian- era furniture. The provenance of one piece, the desk, is that of Emma Armstrong. As far as can be determined the piece either came with her or was purchased and sent to Hampton. Although a rather simplistic desk compared to many pieces from the Victorian era, factory produced pieces were available, as “factory-produced Renaissance Revival suites found a ready market with the general public even when the reform ideas of Charles Eastlake were being introduced during the 1870s. These factory-made suites for the bedroom, parlor, and dining room continued well into the 1880s.”²⁴³ The Victorian bed is believed to be a replica that was made for use in The Mansion House, the home of principals or presidents of Hampton. Although Hampton’s bed has beautiful carving details on the headboard it is not as elaborate as described in the general characteristics:

Types of Victorian furniture include gothic Revival, cottage, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, patent, Eastlake, and golden oak. While these all constitute distinct styles, there are some underlying characteristics that apply overall. There was a love of rich effect, manifested in pieces of massive size and in the use of high-relief carving, flame veneers, burl panels, line-incised decoration, gilt or ebonized accents, marquetry, porcelain plaques, tufted upholstery and rich fabrics.²⁴⁴

There may not be a lot of examples of Victorian pieces at Hampton because Hampton’s ideals did not necessarily match the extravagance of Victorian

²⁴³ Paul P. Linquist and Caroline C. Warren, *Victorian Furniture with Prices* (Pennsylvania: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1993), 25.

²⁴⁴ Linquist and Warren, *Victorian Furniture*, 1.

furniture. Hampton's thrust towards character building would not have meshed well with the "porcelain plaques and tufted upholstery." Simple and sturdy pieces of furniture would have been purchased or made in the early years under Armstrong's guidance and on the practical side, by the 1880s the primary wood used for Victorian style pieces, walnut, was not readily available. Oak was the replacement and was more difficult to carve.

Photographs in the Museum's collection as well as in the private collection of Joyce Hudgens Blair indicate that after World War Two Hampton's Furniture Trades students also worked with "modern furniture." "Sometimes modern furniture is nicknamed "mod" or spelled "modern" to distinguish it from all contemporary pieces."²⁴⁵ Because of the effects of the war and right after the depression, the general public was looking for a different type of furniture. They were interested in purchasing something more readily available and more affordable. In response, Hampton's attempt to keep up with the trends reflects that they too embraced making some pieces that were more modern although if these have survived they are not in our collection. John Hudgens made a desk for the Mansion House in the late 1940s which appears to be in the modern style; however, we have not been able to locate the piece at this time.

The over twenty Colonial Revival pieces in the Hampton University Museum Collection show that this furniture was well made and extremely popular with the Hampton Roads community. The high quality work completed by students in the Furniture Trades at Hampton was attributed to access to the

²⁴⁵ Wise Geek, "What is Modern Furniture?", <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-modern-furniture.htm>.

finest wood from their own saw-mill; the finest machinery and hand tools to create the pieces; access to a well-stocked library and excellent teachers. Unfortunately, the expense to maintain the supply of woods, the machinery and the popularity of large department stores that could afford to purchase large supplies of cheaply made furniture caused Hampton's star to fade. Colonial Williamsburg became better known and began to contract with reproduction furniture suppliers, lending its label and aura of authenticity to the items sold in its shops. These became accessible to white patrons who could afford and may have preferred to purchase their reproductions because of the reputation of Colonial Williamsburg.

Another legacy of the furniture department lies in the documentation of the stories of the Furniture Tradesmen told during the Anniversary of the Trade School in 1996 as well as throughout my research. The conversations from my research and the interviews from the Hampton University Oral History Project are included in an index. However, short summaries of Leonard Joseph Young (1941); Harold Evans (1950) and one of the last graduates of the Trades, Bernard Nicolas are included as Appendix A because all three graduates went on different career paths with their Furniture diplomas and thus illustrate some of the diverse ways that manual training in furniture making could be put to use. These graduates worked in a tradition which emphasized skills learned at Hampton, and promoted the legacy of Armstrong's ideals. Not only are these graduates proficient at their trades but they have gone on to other aspirations. From government liaisons in industrial education, working in furniture stores nationally, teaching vocational

education, traveling the world and owning their own businesses they are great examples of Hampton's standard of excellence.

CONCLUSION

Oh Hampton, a thought sent from heaven above,
To be a great soul's inspiration;
We sing thee the earnest of broad human love,
The shrine of our heart's adoration.
Thy foundation firm and thy roof tree outspread,
And thy sacred altar fires burning;
The sea circling 'round thee, soft skies overhead
Dear Hampton, the goal of our yearning!
O Hampton, we never can make thee a song,
Except as our lives do the singing,
In service that will thy great spirit prolong
And send it through centuries ringing!²⁴⁶

Hampton Alma Mata
(Fernandis, 1882; Northern, 1924)

During reconstruction time they were folks who had been
promised 40 acres and a mule. And they were told a man with
their legal papers could be expected on a train from Washington.
They were folks who waited for him and there are folks who are still
waiting for him. But you can't depend on the train from Washington,
it's 100 years overdue...#8320.²⁴⁷

The Train from Washington
(Gill Scott Heron)

Out of the Industries that were designed by the founder Samuel Chapman
Armstrong, Hampton now has the Department of Architecture, Mechanical and Electrical
Engineering as well as other majors and schools. From Booker T. Washington who came
to Hampton with little money and no means of acquiring an education, the Work Year

²⁴⁶ Hampton Alma Mater, music by Robert Northern and words by Sarah Fernadis,

²⁴⁷ Google search, [www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/gilscottheron/the train from washington.html](http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/gilscottheron/the%20train%20from%20washington.html).

Program was developed so that students could work their way through school. We now have a federal Work Study program to assist students with tuition as they work in different departments on college campuses. Then, there is Leonard Joseph Young from Delaware who will be turning ninety-four years old at the time of the writing of this dissertation. The last time I spoke with him, I mentioned how his classmate, Reuben Burrell was doing (he also will be 94 on his next birthday) and that he should return to Hampton for a visit. Aging and not feeling very well, Mr. Young said he would not be returning to Hampton, his “Home by the Sea,” because he was not up to traveling anymore. His wife, who is a year older than he, chided him about allowing a little ill health keep him from traveling and how she still planned to continue. However, he seemed satisfied that his dream to have some type of indication that the Armstrong-Slater building that is now used for the art department, Army ROTC, and several other offices on campus, was recognized for its original purpose – The Trade School. A building where so many men and women achieved their dreams to acquire an education; to pay their way through school, and to either pursue a career in cabinet-making or another trade. Many became vocational educators in their communities and abroad and even one, from upholstery major to the first Black president of Hampton as was the case for President Alonzo G. Moron.

Reuben Burrell remembers the day that President Moron closed the Trade School. It was a sad time for many. Still employed by the University Burrell has witnessed a lot of changes both to the curriculum and the physical layout of the grounds. Often times when new construction or repairs are being made to campus buildings, he will comment on how those trades used to be done by Hampton students and graduates and how now it

is all outsourced to others. He also talks about how he appreciates what Hampton did for him and that is why he continues to give back.

It was my wish with this dissertation to place these men and women in a place of honor. Based on a paper I wrote for Professor Barbara Carson, in a material culture course I took at the College of William and Mary, “Hampton: A Maker of Men” I felt compelled to show that although Hampton propagated a manual training program that it was a viable career choice. Certainly, the students from the 1940s whose narratives I use and even the students who graduated in the 1960s, like Darryl and Sandra Randolph and Bernard Nicholas exude a sense of pride when they speak of the education they obtained at Hampton. No, Hampton was not a perfect environment; racism and other ills of society were not excluded from the experience but still graduates were able to obtain a decent living, some traveling and working in areas beyond their belief.

The Foundation and the future of this school are in its ideas, rather than in any specific form its life may take” said its founder, in one of those masterly annual reports in which he laid out the charts of its course.²⁴⁸

As I indicated in the introduction it is not my intent to judge Armstrong or the other white administrators and trustees of Hampton, but to show that the intentions of its founders created an uplifted citizenry –ascension to middle class status with the furniture made in the school as a symbol as expressed by Klaric for,

Every distinct style in furniture, considered in its purity, met the needs and expressed the character of the people who made it and the age in which it was made.” During the nineteenth century, a broader population began to purchase furnishings and household goods in the quantity, variety, and

²⁴⁸Peabody, *Education for Life*, 51.

lower costs made possible by mechanized production. Domestic furnishings were “read” for information about their owners’ identities and values. The purchase and presentation of furnishings assumed an ethical dimension as styles, materials, and construction methods delineated the purchaser’s civility—social, intellectual, and cultural. In effect, interiors were “artifactual portraits.”²⁴⁹

All the donations and exhibitions demonstrate how these materials help to create identity.

Through this dissertation I was able to complete an inventory of the pieces of furniture in the museum’s collection that were made by students in the Trade School. I have also documented the stories of some of the craftsmen who went on to work in the field of cabinet-making and documented some of their furniture produced after Hampton. Also, there are many leads on pieces of furniture in personal collections that I was unable to photograph and learn more about and these references become a part of what still needs to be completed. I am still receiving telephone calls from people wanting to sell Hampton made furniture and still there are others willing to donate these items. The work of collecting and documenting this extraordinary time in the history of Hampton University must continue. Throughout American history, African Americans have been intimately involved in charting their own educational achievement through both manual and classical training. Hampton University and other HBCU’s represent this tradition.

²⁴⁹ Arlette Klaric, “Gustave Stickley’s Design for the Home,” 178.

APPENDIX A

CABINETMAKERS AT HAMPTON: PERSONAL NARRATIVES

Leonard Joseph Young, Hampton Institute, 1941, Trade Certificate and Trade Diploma, Hampton Institute, Bachelor of Science, Industrial Education, 1947, Hampton Institute, MS

Leonard J. Young graduated from Hampton in 1941 with a trade school certificate and diploma. The certificate and diploma were equivalent to the coursework needed for an associate degree. After graduation he worked in the Trade School as an assistant to James Adams and repaired furniture. Young married Vivian Bridgeforth, a young woman from Richmond, Virginia who worked for one of the military training programs that was located on Hampton's campus in 1942. Actually, her office was where the Furniture Trades set up their displays to sell the furniture. Young recalls that at the age of 21 that he was in school at Hampton, married with a child and "employed by Hampton as a cabinetmaker in charge of the maintenance of campus furniture and a part-time instructor."²⁵⁰ Young spoke fondly of those years that he and his wife lived and worked on the campus. He was drafted into the military in 1943 and served almost three years in the military during World War II as many of the men that attended Hampton were also called to duty. Young returned to Hampton January 1946 for three more semesters completing requirements to obtain a B. S. degree in Industrial Education in June 1947.

²⁵⁰Leonard J. Young, " Fifty Years out of Hampton Institute (University) or from the Trade School to the United Nations," paper presented to a Life Long Learning class in Delaware, 1.

After retiring to his home in Delaware, Joseph Young enrolled in the local Elderhostel program at the university where he began to write historic vignettes of his days at Hampton and how Hampton helped him in his life's endeavors. Young, extremely proud of his education at Hampton revealed, "The demand for vocational training, instructors with my background of trade training was so great that I received nearly 50 slips from the placement office announcing job vacancies I should apply for." Also a recipient of the Work Year Program, Young recalls,

I don't know when the work year program started but I know it flourished during the period between the two world wars 1918 - 1945. "I was accepted as a work year student at Hampton in the fall of 1937 after I had graduated from high school. Since I did not have the prerequisite courses for college entrance (math and science) the work year program was the only entry I had to a college education. My other barrier was that my parents did not have the money to send me to college..."²⁵¹

One of his vignettes presents a glimpse of a typical day when he was a Trade School student. It details how first, the student would attend one hour of church in the morning; have lunch at noon - and from the end of lunch until 2:00 p.m. the males and females could socialize. The period from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. was quiet and during this time students were allowed to return to their dormitories to study or take a nap.²⁵² Both Burrell and Young attended Hampton at the same time as well as worked there at the same time. Young's memories are very similar to Burrell's and other graduates.

Once the Young's left Hampton, Joe Young worked at several universities teaching Vocational Education courses. He worked in Tuscan, Arizona for one year, then moved to jobs at Tennessee State College in Nashville and later a job at the University of Tallahassee in Florida. He obtained a Masters degree in Industrial Education at Wayne

²⁵¹ Young conversation with author.

²⁵² Young conversation with author.

State in Detroit. He also attended graduate school at the University of Minnesota and enrolled in the doctoral program in 1955. However he was offered a job with the United Nations and worked in the International Labor Office in Geneva, Switzerland for over twenty-four years. Young also served three years on a United Nations assignment in Surinam, South America. After retiring on his 60th birthday he worked for ten years as a faculty member at Temple University in the field of Industrial and Vocational Education conducting courses to certify vocational teachers. Joseph Leonard Young has led a very successful life traveling extensively throughout the United States, parts of Canada, Asia, North and East Africa, Western Europe, and the Caribbean, all the while continuing to make furniture for his personal use with his family. Young was told when he graduated from high school that he should not try to attend Howard University because he did not have the proper preparation and skills. He was told to go the vocational route because he was not strong in mathematics and other academic courses. From his mechanical drawings he made in the Furniture Trades in 1938 and his career with the government and universities one would not believe the advice he received.

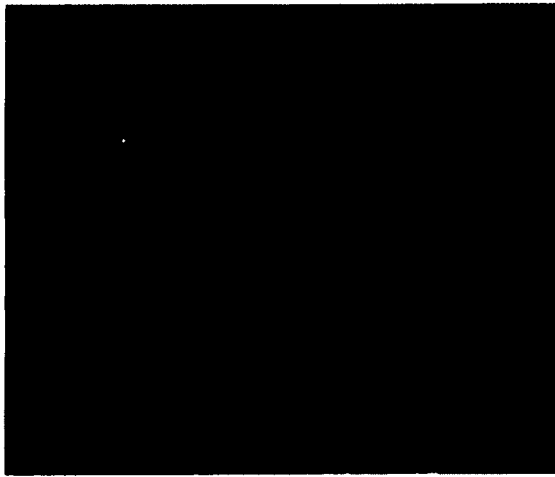


Figure60, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard "Joe" Young at their home in Delaware along with a table Young made for use in his home, c. 2011, Richard Ward, photographer

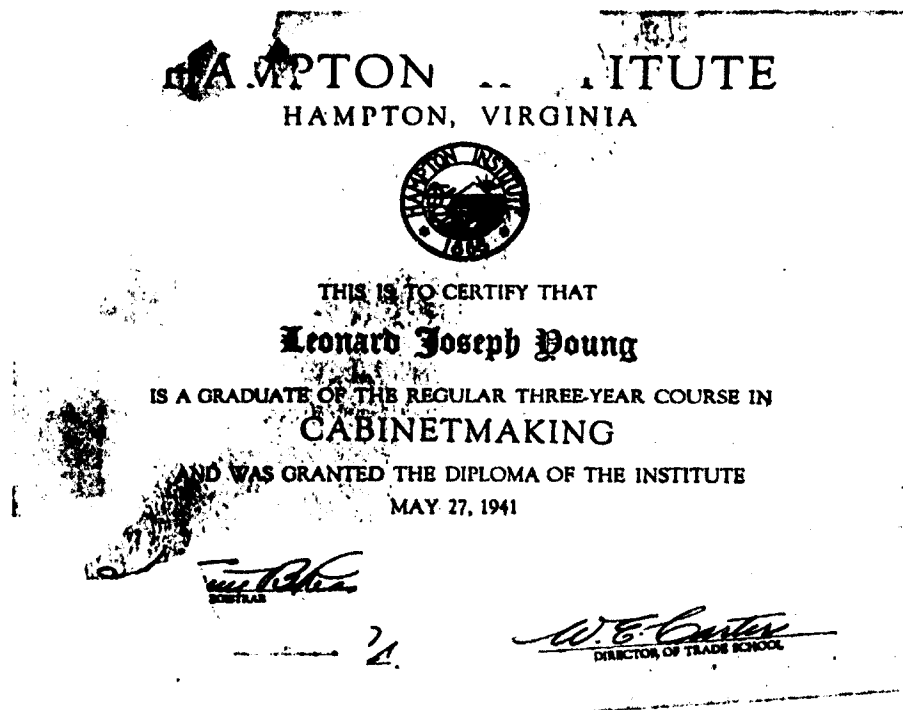


Figure 61 1941Cabinetmaking Diploma, Hampton University Museum Oral History Collection

Malady 8. 2

Wid. Lee Richardson
Nancy Louis Thurman, Jr.
Alberta Lee Mandy
Edythe Bertha Gray
Mabelle Elizabeth Warren

Harold Evans, Hampton Institute, 1950, College Certificate for Furniture Trade and a Trade Diploma

Harold Evans was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina in 1929 and moved with his family to Newport News. He attended Huntington High School graduating in 1946 skilled in drafting and sheet metal after taking these vocational courses. He entered Hampton the second semester of 1947 where he majored in Furniture Trades although he had originally signed up for the sheet metal trade. Evans recalls the degrees he obtained when he finished Hampton:

At that particular time you got a college certificate – certifying that you finished your trade and a diploma indicated you finished all the requirements of the college - proficiencies in speech and other areas.²⁵³

Evans received the same certifications that Young completed except he did not return to Hampton for a Bachelor of Science degree. After graduating from Hampton, Evans first job was as a furniture polisher at Mullins Furniture Company, located in Jersey City, New Jersey in 1950. He polished the furniture after it was placed on the display floor. After which, he found a better job at a factory that made boxes for the Navy:

It was instrument boxes. This man said you are the first colored fellow I hired. It was really confusing at that time. Some of them thought I was Hispanic at times.²⁵⁴

Issues of race and complexion continue to remain important to the discussion because they reflect what African American men were faced with as they tried to

²⁵³ Harold Evans Interview

²⁵⁴ Harold Evans Interview

enter the job market and what Hampton was or was not doing correctly to prepare their graduates for the changing world. Married in 1952, Evans was immediately drafted March 23, 1952, to serve in the Korean War and served until 1954.

When he returned to Hampton, he and his wife, Elizabeth Hyman Evans, a public health nurse, began their family. He worked at a company in Hampton, Gully Howard, which was located on Pembroke Avenue and was known for making cabinets. The company eventually changed its name to Highpoint Refrigerator and Appliances. In the meantime, Mr. Evans acquired a job in the Post Office because he was not garnering enough pay to take care of his family. Also a recipient of the GI bill, Mr. Evans used his to purchase a home in Granger Court, a black community in the city of Hampton and then in Aberdeen another black community established during President Roosevelt's administration.

Although, Evans was no longer working as a cabinet maker he continued to make pieces in his spare time. During the years, Evans family continued to grow and he continued to work with the U. S. Postal service and sent two of his children to Hampton University where they graduated from. Evans resides in Hampton with his second wife (his first deceased) and is still very active with Hampton Alumni activities.

Nick's Cabinet-making, Hampton Institute, 1960, Furniture Design and Construction

Mr. Bernard Nicholas represents the changing times in the cabinet-making department. He is one of the last students to complete the program before it was completely phased out. After graduating from Hampton Institute, he worked for a French furniture designer and manufacturer as a machine and assembly mechanic. Nicholas

began his teaching career in Calvert County, Maryland in 1962 where he taught Industrial Arts. He also taught in Montgomery County Public Schools in 1967. While teaching, he continued to practice his cabinet-making trade from his home shop. After teaching for ten years he decided to turn his passion for cabinet-making into his full-time occupation.

A friend of Darryl Randolph (Hampton, Architecture, 1960) and his wife, Sandra Randolph (Fine Art, 1960 (1997), Nicholas was asked to build a cabinet for them. Similar to the early days of the Trade School Mr. Randolph shared what he wanted and because of the skills he acquired at Hampton, Randolph was able to draw his own specifications for the product:

Bernard,

Sandra and I have gotten our thoughts together regarding a cabinet we would like for you to build. I have included a general design drawing (incl. #1) which gives the general dimensions. Enclosure # 2 shows where the cabinet will be located – replacing the glass cabinet. Enclosure #3 shows a larger cabinet similar to what we want. Basically, we want a rosewood cabinet to match the other furniture in our dining room. It is better to have rosewood or a mirror for the inside of the cabinet? I know there may be structural consideration to take into account. The inside of the cabinet is to be lighted in some fashion. We need your expertise as to how to proceed. Actually, after we get your thoughts, we will come up for a sit-down with you to make final decisions. Our thoughts are below:

1. Cabinet should be made of rosewood or other wood that can be stained to appear as Rosewood (First choice is rosewood).
2. Cabinet should have a minimum of four (4) adjustable glass shelves.)
3. Inside back of cabinet will be covered with a mirror. Is it better to have adjustable shelf vertical support strips secured to the cabinet back and mirror strips between the support strips?
4. Cabinet will have a center beveled glass doors for structural integrity.
5. Cabinet will be lighted – top and bottom.

6. Side/front/door glass will be beveled.
7. Cabinet base is open to suggestions
8. Cabinet top should be similar to illustration provided²⁵⁵

Mr. Randolph's photographs document the process that took place in acquiring the cabinet that they needed to display the items in their collection.



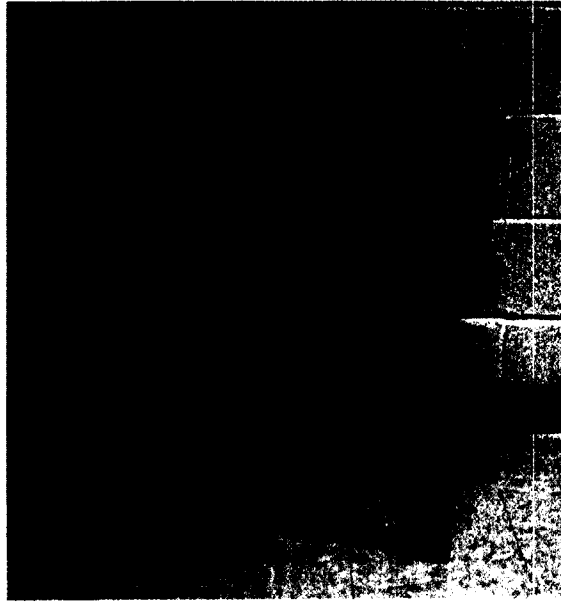
Figure 64, Curio Cabinet made by Bernard Nicholas for the Randolph's, c. 2010, Darryl Randolph, photographer

²⁵⁵ Correspondence to Bernard Nicholas from Darryl and Sandra Randolph, March 23, 1999. There was not an opportunity to talk at length with Mr. Nicholas so much of the information on his background is from his website on the internet and my discussions with Darryl Randolph about "Nick."

Appendix B

**Select Furniture Catalog from the Hampton University
Museum**

Catalogue 1, Mahogany Sewing Table



Object	"Sewing" Table, Sheraton Style
Date	c. 1950s
State	Virginia
Maker	Reuben V. Burrell

Description:

Mr. Burrell made this from a picture that was hanging in the "shop". Students would have to draw to specifications pieces of furniture based on photographs found in magazines or books. This is a work table or similar to a small table that were popular in the late 18th century. Many were made with the top arranged to lift, disclosing a cabinet with compartments for sewing materials. They were also made with folding flaps to allow for their use as a writing table or for cards or chess. Another design has drawers, often fitted with a frame beneath, to which is attached a silk or velvet bag. The frame pulls out like a drawer, exposing the open top of the bag. Those of Sheraton design are of superior excellence. The so-called Martha Washington table is probably an American innovation on the English work tables.

Construction:

Work table with a flat top with folding flaps or drop leaf. The front of the table has one drawer with two brass knobs (bells). The legs resemble that of the Sheraton design as they are straight.

Condition:

Excellent. Has received some minor conservation in 2007.

Materials:

Mahogany, mahogany veneers, black walnut, and maple. Interior of the drawer is poplar.

Dimensions:

46" w. x 20" l. x 30' h.

Marks:

Unsigned

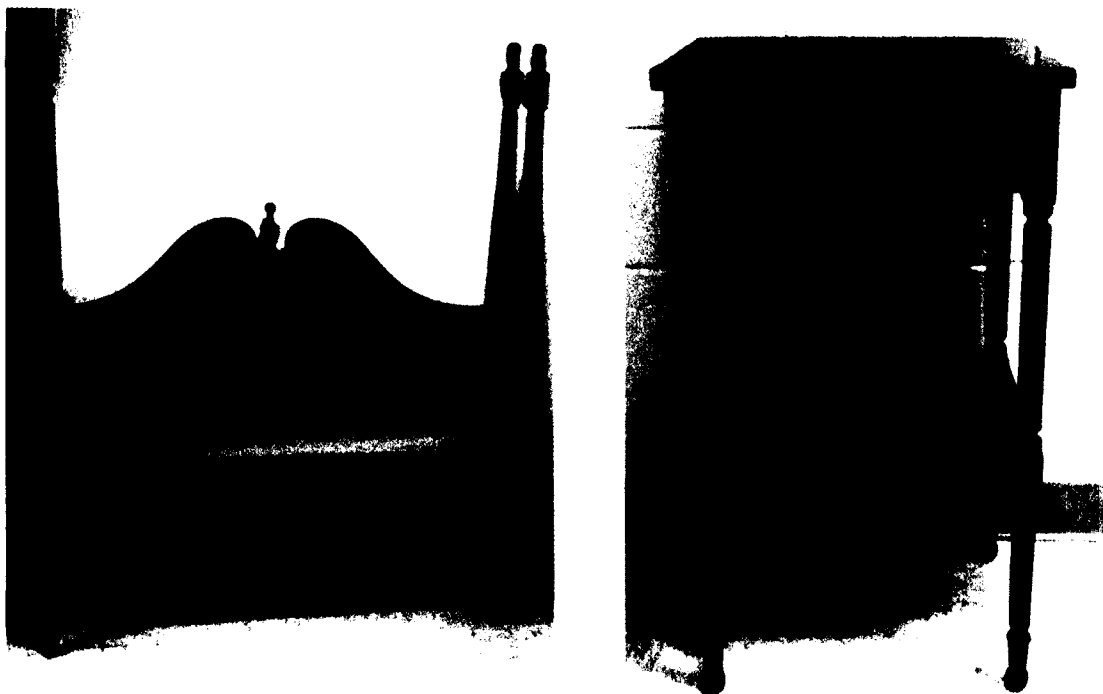
Provenance:

The sewing table belonged to a Hampton Institute graduate. A personal friend of Burrell she asked him to make a sewing table for her. The table was used in her home until she donated it to the Hampton University Museum in 2007. The table was conserved in 2007 prior to being exhibited in the 400th Anniversary of Jamestown Exhibition at the Hampton University Museum.

Collection:

Hampton University Museum

Catalogue 2, Colonial Revival Four Piece Bedroom Suite



Colonial Revival Bedroom Suite

c. 1940s

Hampton, Virginia

Hampton Institute Furniture Trade School Students

Construction:

The four piece that includes a headboard, footboard (slats), chest of drawers, and a side table. The suite also includes a mirror. The top of the *chest of drawers* is a flat top with projecting corners which are about $\frac{3}{4}$ semi-circles at each corner. The detailing of the legs other than the reeded pilasters are different from the other pieces of furniture in this set. The top of the legs have rings and then a section is reeded followed by more rings and terminating in peg. The front of the chest is composed of two small drawers on the top and four very large and deep drawers. There are wooden knobs on the chest and brass key holes on each drawer. The interior of the case of the drawer uses the tongue and groove technique.

The *side table* is mahogany and the inside of the drawers are ash similar to the chest. The table is made with a shelf and also has the reeded pilasters on all four slender legs which is similar to the Sheraton style. The bottom of the chest of drawers and the side table is made with plywood. The knobs on the chest of drawers and the side table are the same. The details of the rails on the side table and on the exterior of the dresser are the same spiral turned half columns which can also be found on top of the mirror that has full sized rosettes on all four corners. The same full size rosettes can also be found on the bed frame.

The *headboard* has a broken arch pediment with rosettes carved on the ends. A reeded flame finial is in the center of the arch. The bed post also has the flame finial on end of the beautifully carved reeded pilasters. The bedrails are made of Ash and the center area of the rails is mahogany. The construction and workmanship of all of the pieces create a beautiful and sturdy set.

Condition:

Excellent overall. The chest of drawer has a few nicks on the drawers.

Materials:

Mahogany, plywood, mahogany veneer, stain

Dimensions:

Chest of Drawers: 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ " w x 52" l x 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " d

Mirror: 30" w x 25" l x 2 ½" d

Headboard/footboard: 56 ¾" w x 68" h x 3" d

Slats: 6" w x 78" l x 2 ¾" d

Side Table: 20 ¼" w x 31" l x 16 ¼" d

Marks:

Hand written marks in pencil showing where the maker was measuring on the back of the dresser.

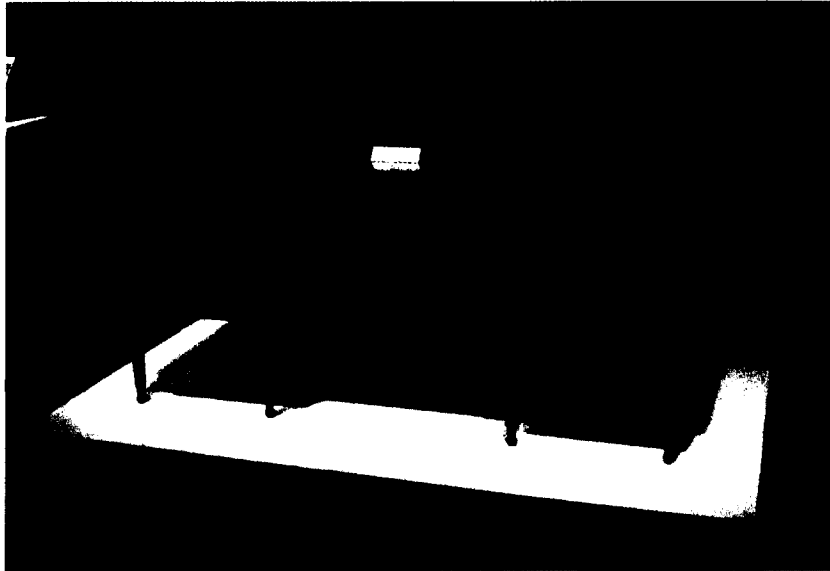
Provanence:

Purchased by the donor's parents from the Hampton Institute Trade School. They received the set when the donor and his wife set up house and it was used in the bedroom of one of their daughters. Donated to Hampton University Museum.

Collection:

Hampton University Museum

Catalogue 3, Replica of General George Washington's Desk



Replica of General George Washington's Desk ca 1930s

Hampton, Virginia

Maker, probably James Adams, Furniture Trades Instructor and/or Furniture Trade School Student

Description:

This desk is a replica of a "flat top mahogany desk which was used by George Washington after he became President of the United States in 1789." The students in the cabinet-making department made a replica of this desk for President of the United States, Roosevelt. The desk was presented to his wife Eleanor Roosevelt in 1938. A prominent businessman saw the desk and wanted one just like it. The Cabinet-making Department made another desk which was sold to the gentleman.

Construction:

The desk is made in the "Sheraton style shown by the round, fluted and tapering legs and twelve rosettes faintly seen on the side. The other side is similar and either side may be used as the front. There are seven drawers on each side with brass handles. On each end there

are six handles which, with the moldings give the appearance of drawers; but these are “sham” drawers and are examples of a device of the period. The two shelves at each end are no doubt intended for papers, but are not satisfactory for that purpose. (About 1795 from *American Antique Furniture*, pg. 454.) The top of the desk has 2 attachments on either side that are removable. Measures 35 ½” x 11 ¼” x 5 ½” that fit into the top of the desk with wooden pegs.

Condition:

Excellent

Materials:

Mahogany, brass

Dimensions:

H.36” L. 71½”x W. 35½”

Marks:

N/A

Provenance:

Desk purchased by a prominent family in the 1950s and used in an office space. After the death of the original owner the desk was given to the daughter, who in turn placed it as a permanent loan to the Hampton University Museum.

Catalogue 4, Indian Table



Indian Table

Hampton, Virginia

c. 1895

Maker Unknown, Hampton Institute Indian Student(s)

Description:

This table was made by Native American students at Hampton under the direction of Mr. Edward Spennie, an instructor in the Trade School from 1891 until 1933, and is representative of the quality of craftsmanship produced in Hampton's Trade School. Similar examples of furniture which demonstrated the excellent work of Hampton students were exhibited at such national exhibitions as the Atlanta Exposition, 1895; the St. Louis Exposition, 1904; and the Jamestown Exhibition, 1907. The table was most recently on exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute, Museum of American History

Construction:

Work table with a flat square top with molded edges. The top extends beyond the skirt of the table. The front face of the table has one drawer with molded beading around the drawer and on the edge of the table. The drawer has two brass handles with a ring that is often used with the Sheraton style. The legs of the table are intricately carved with reeded

spiral turned columns, with a pineapple design mixed in. The legs sit on an 18th century styled flattened ball-turn.

Condition:

Good - four light scratches on the top of the table. Has received some minor conservation when the table traveled. The table is very sturdy and craftsmanship is excellent.

Materials:

Oak possibly white. A dark stain. The interior of the drawer is ash and there are nails (horse shoe nails).

Dimensions:

35" w x 31 ¾" h x 26 ½" d

Marks:

N/A

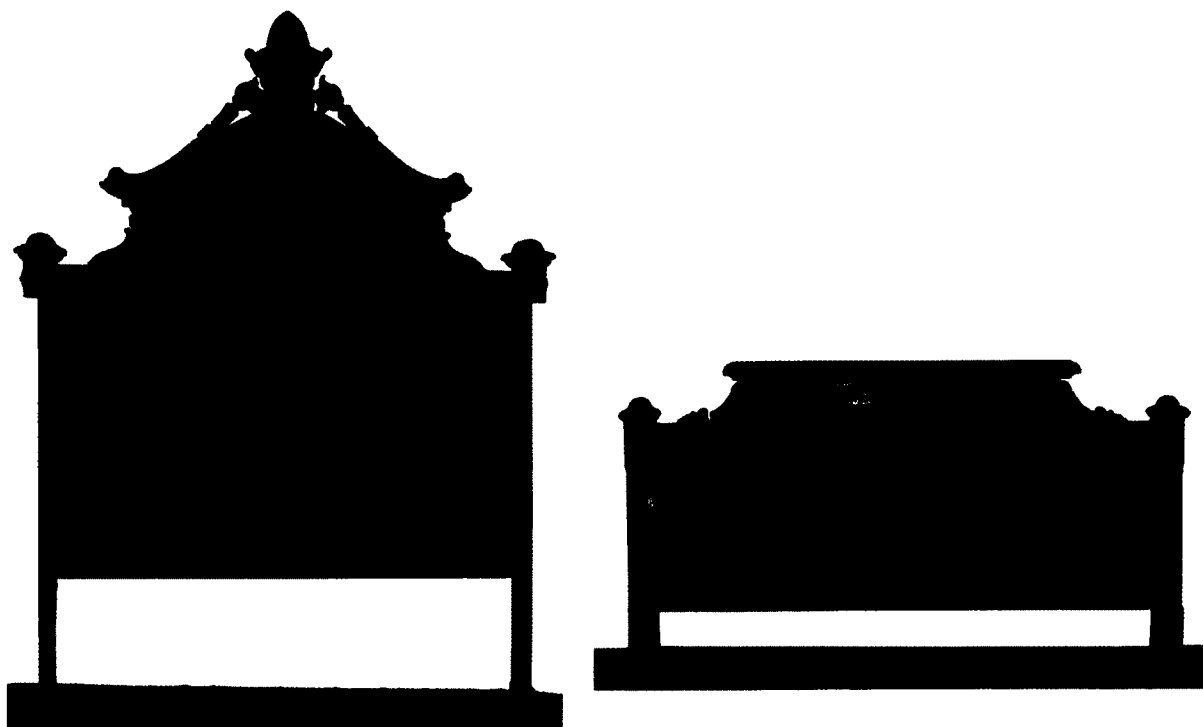
Provenance:

Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Hampton University Museum. Traveled to the Smithsonian Institution.

Collection:

Collection of Hampton University Museum

Catalogue 5, Replica of Victorian Style Bed Frame



Replica of Victorian Style Bed frame, c. 1880s

c. Date made at Hampton unknown

Hampton, Virginia

Maker unknown, Hampton Institute Furniture Trade School Student

Description:

This bed frame includes a headboard, footboard and the slabs. The bed is made of mahogany and has several design motifs that reflect the Victorian Period.

Construction:

The headboard is essentially made from four boards with the top of the bed carved with leaves. The top of the headboard has a domed crest topped by the same designs with the very top piece with a scroll that meets in the middle of another dome. The middle of the crest is a raised circle that is also reflected on the footboard. The top piece is a separate

piece that slips into the other section – a square base. Additionally there are molded inlays that create a part of the design and a raised molded shape that has a textured stain. The footboard is one large carved piece of wood and the legs that sit on a square foot are attached to the bed with slats. The carving is similar to the headboard with the same raised molded, textured stain.

Condition:

Footboard – one leg broken

Scratches, some discoloration in the wood from age

Materials:

Mahogany

Dimensions:

Headboard – 63 ½” w x 85” long

Footboard – 60 w x 33 long

Marks:

N/A

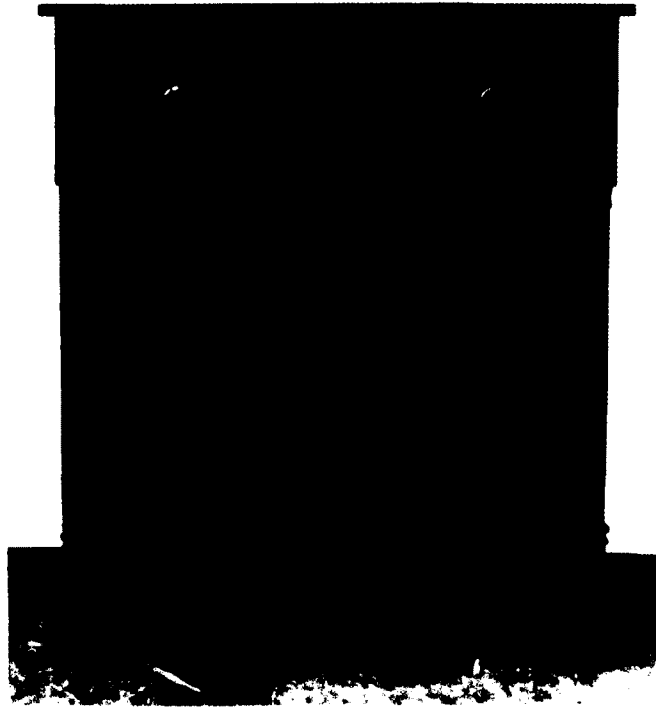
Provenance:

The wooden bed frame from the estate of John Riddick was said to have once been in the Mansion House on the campus of Hampton Institute (University). It was also said to have been made on campus. The Hampton University Museum purchased the bed in January 1987.

Collection:

Collection of Hampton University Museum

Catalog 6, Mahogany Chest of Drawers



Mahogany Chest of Drawers

c. 1940s

Hampton, Virginia

Maker Unknown, Hampton Institute Furniture Trade School Student

Description:

Chest of drawers of a reddish mahogany color.

Construction:

Flat top attached to a very sturdy frame. The front of the chest is composed of four graduated drawers with the top drawer extending over the other three. Each drawer has molded edges that sets the drawers off from the frame. Each drawer has two wooden knobs with key holes at the center.

Condition:

Excellent

Materials:

Mahogany, poplar, plywood

Dimensions:

41" w x 48" h x 23" d

Marks:

N/A

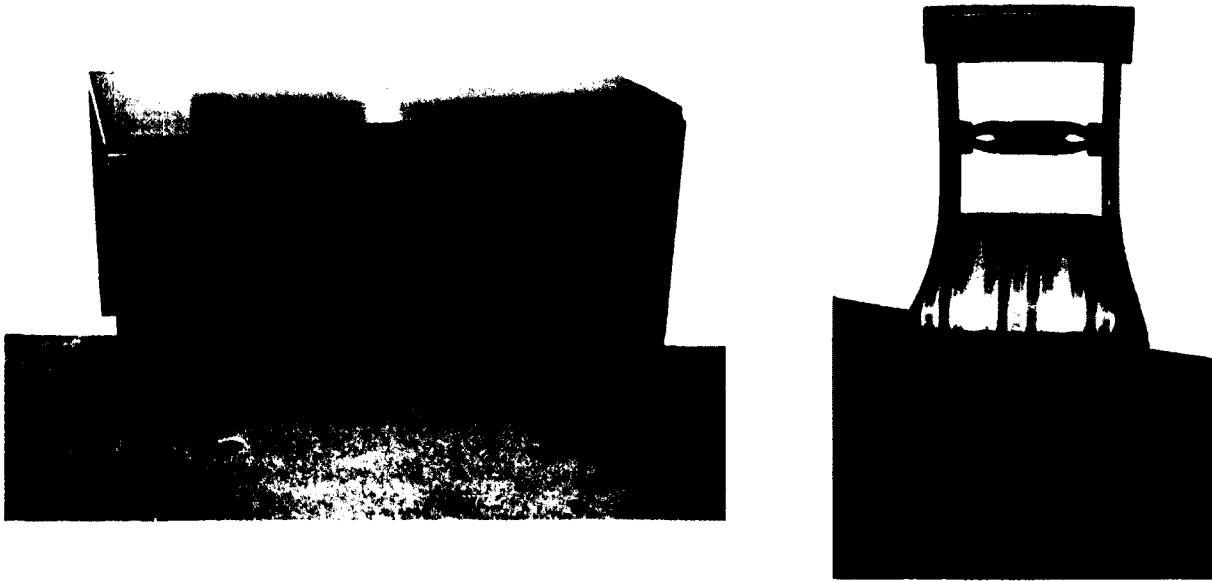
Provenance:

N/A

Collection:

Hampton University Museum Collection

Catalogue 7, Gate leg Drop Leaf Dining Room Table



Hepplewhite-style dropleaf diningtable and Chairs

c.1940s

Hampton, VA

Maker Unknown, Hampton Institute Furniture Trade School Student

Construction:

Flat top, drop leaf with the gate-leg feature. The leaves of the table hang down on hinges from the sides of the central section when not in use, and when up it is held in position by legs which swing out. The table sits on four-square, tapered legs.

Six chairs were a part of the set. The chairs had been reupholstered at some point.

Condition:

Excellent

Materials:

Table - Mahogany

Chairs – Mahogany or rosewood

Dimensions:

Marks:

N/A

Provenance:

Made in the Hampton Institute Trade school around 1940's. Purchased by Hampton alumni and her husband, a local attorney. This set was used in their home located in Hampton. When the donor also donated the sewing table made by Reuben V. Burrell she promised that she would leave the dining room table and chairs in her will for the Hampton University Museum.

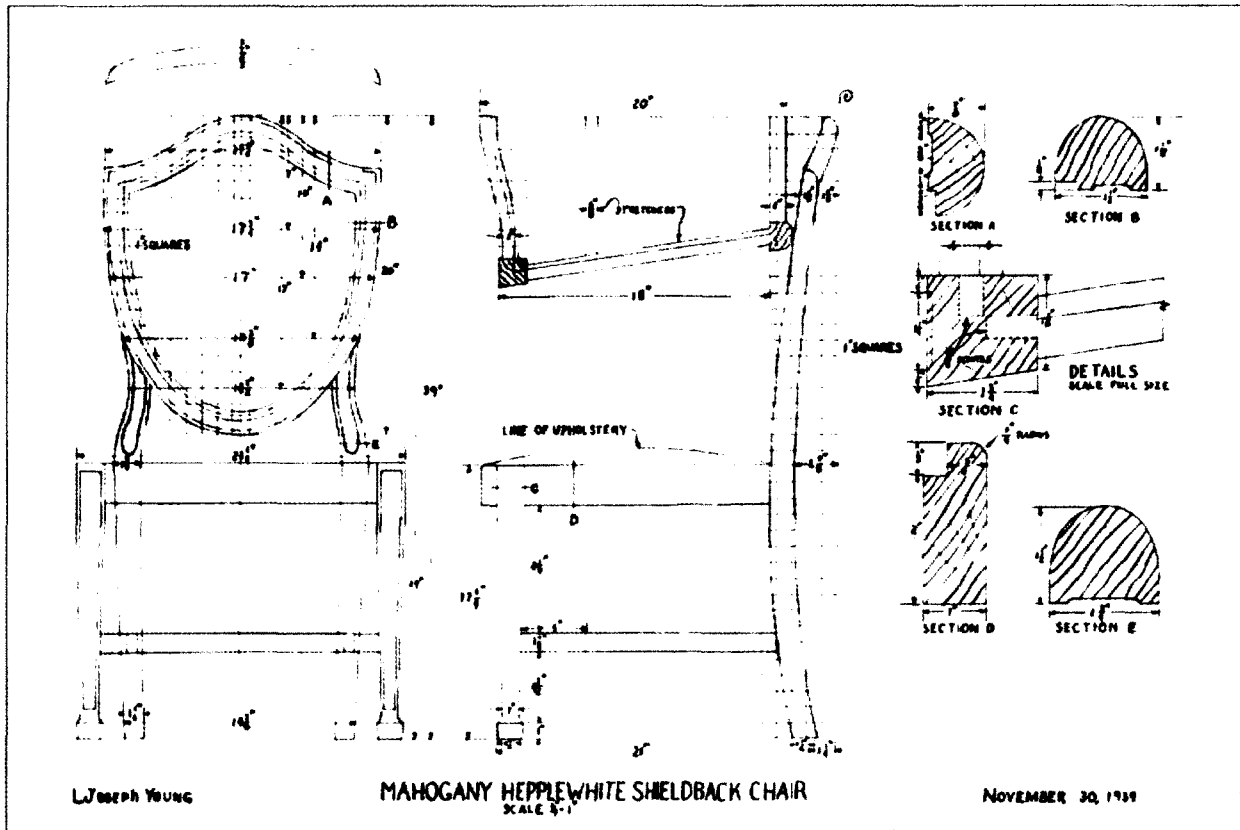
Collection:

Collection of the Hampton University Museum

AppendixC

Leonard J. Young, Sr. Original Drawings

Detailed Drawings of Period Style Furniture Made in the Trade School



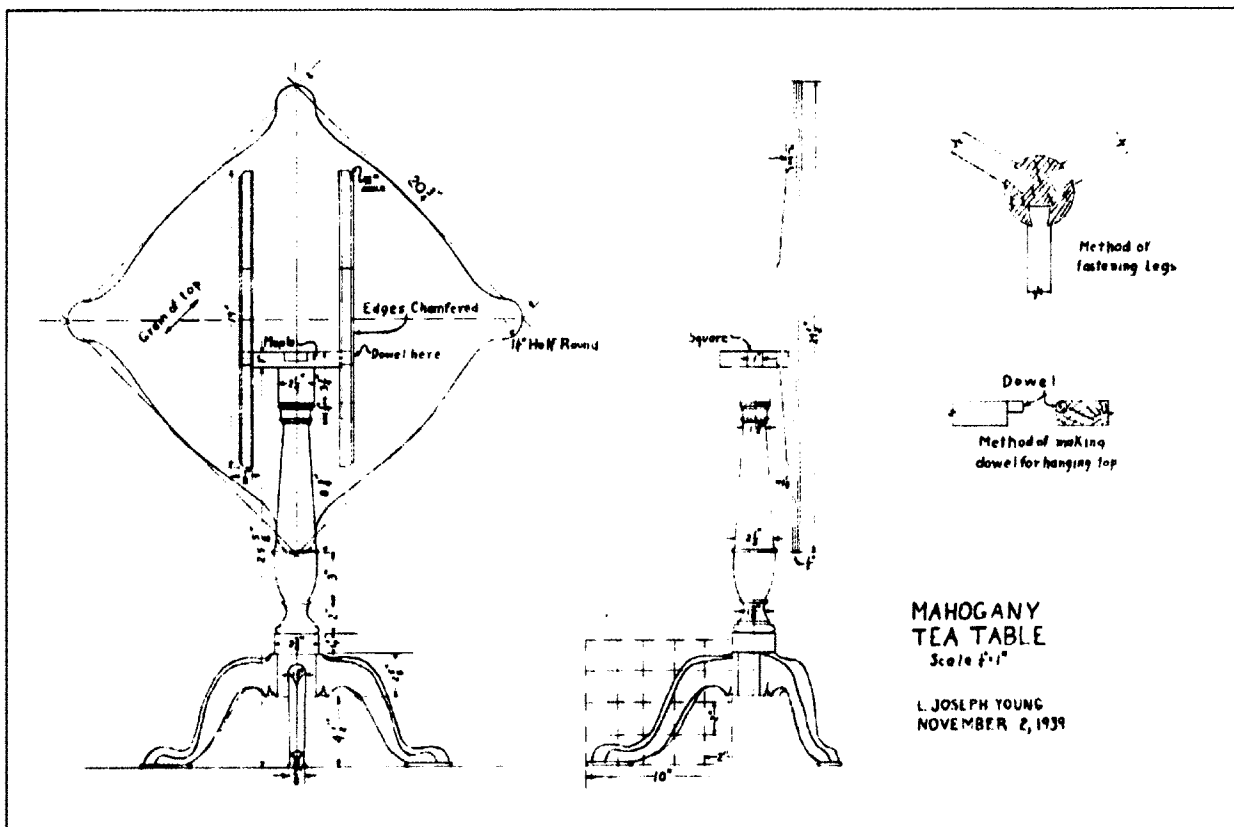


Diagram 2
Leonard Young
Mahogany Tea Table
November 2, 1939
Pen and ink
Scale 1/4" x 1"

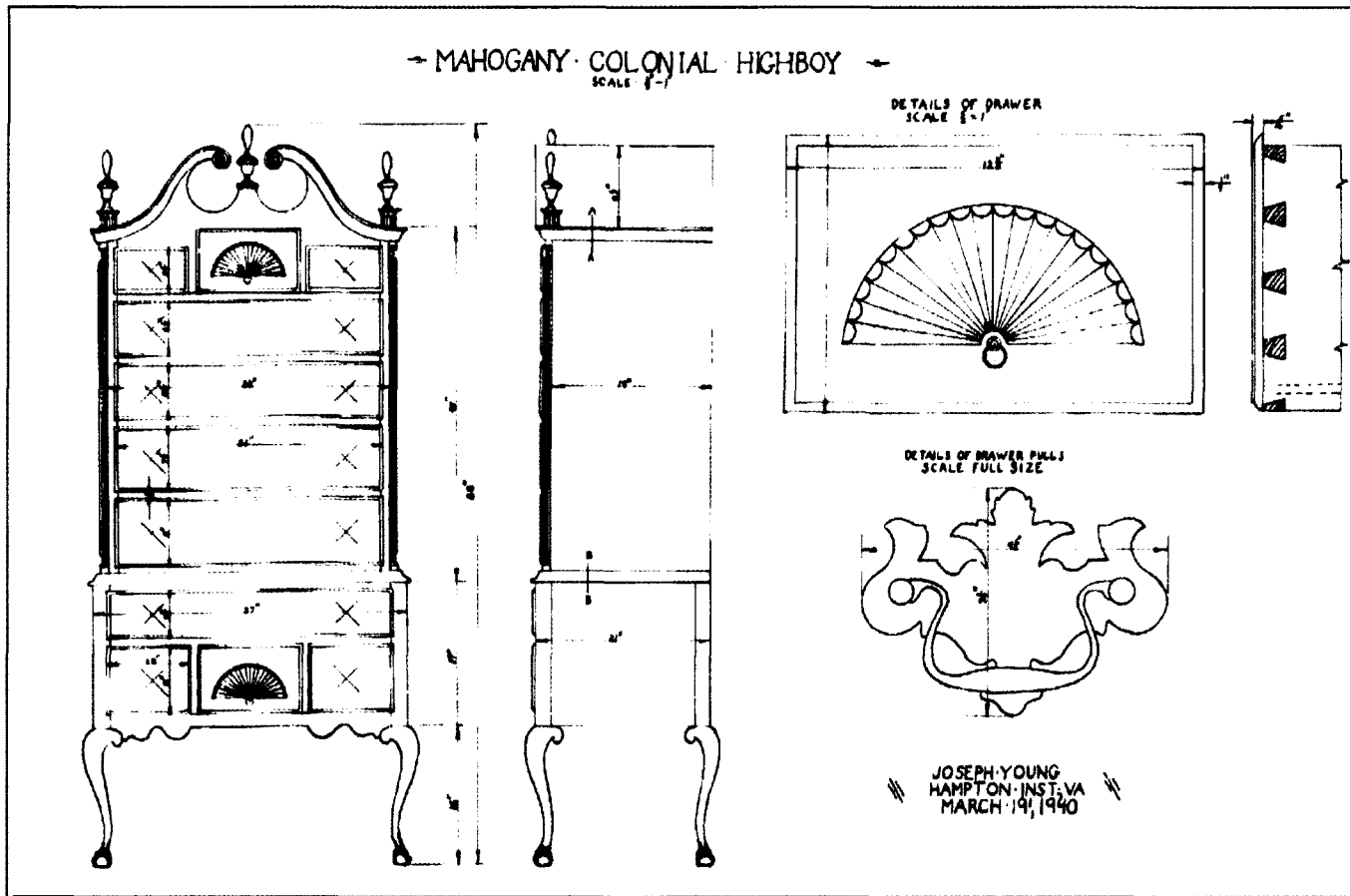


Diagram 3
Leonard Young
Mahogany Colonial Highboy
March 19, 1940
Pen and ink
Scale 1/8" x 1"

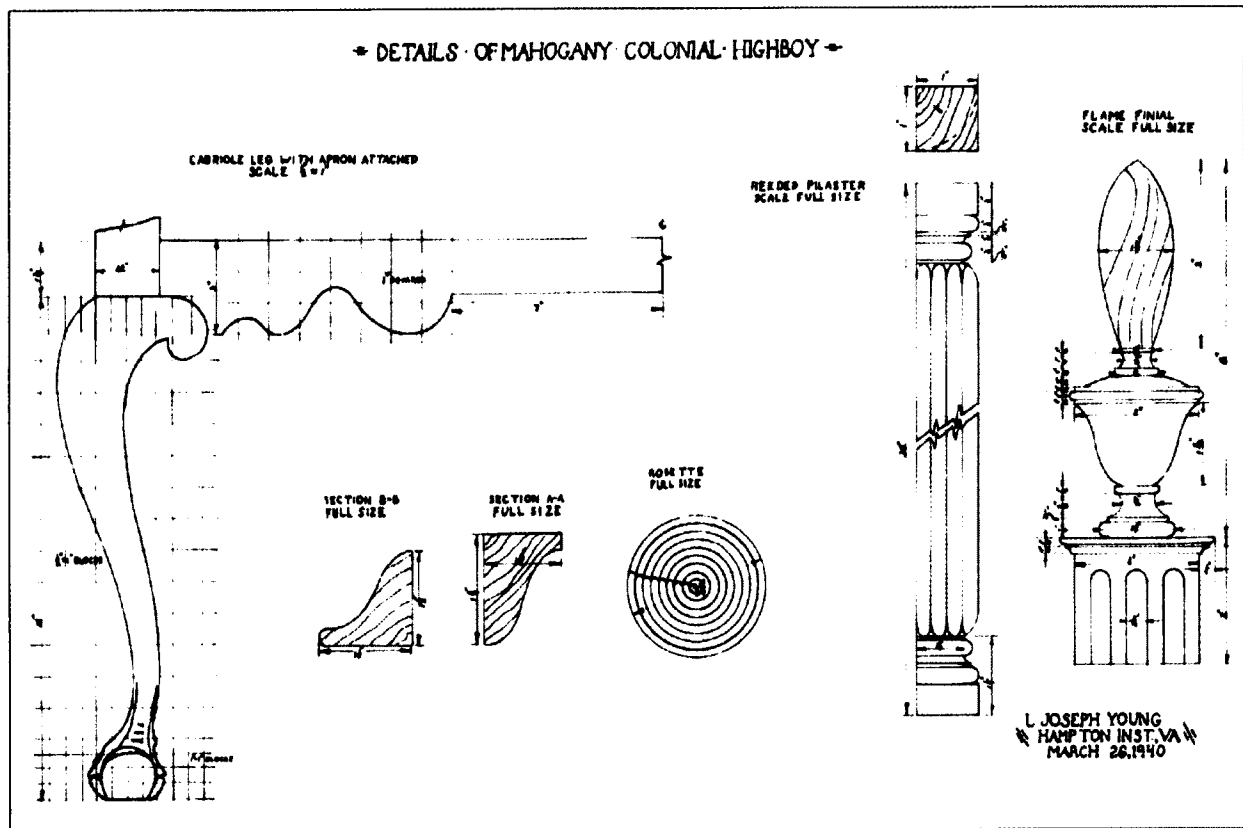


Diagram 4
Leonard Young
Detail of Highboy
March 26, 1940
Pen and ink

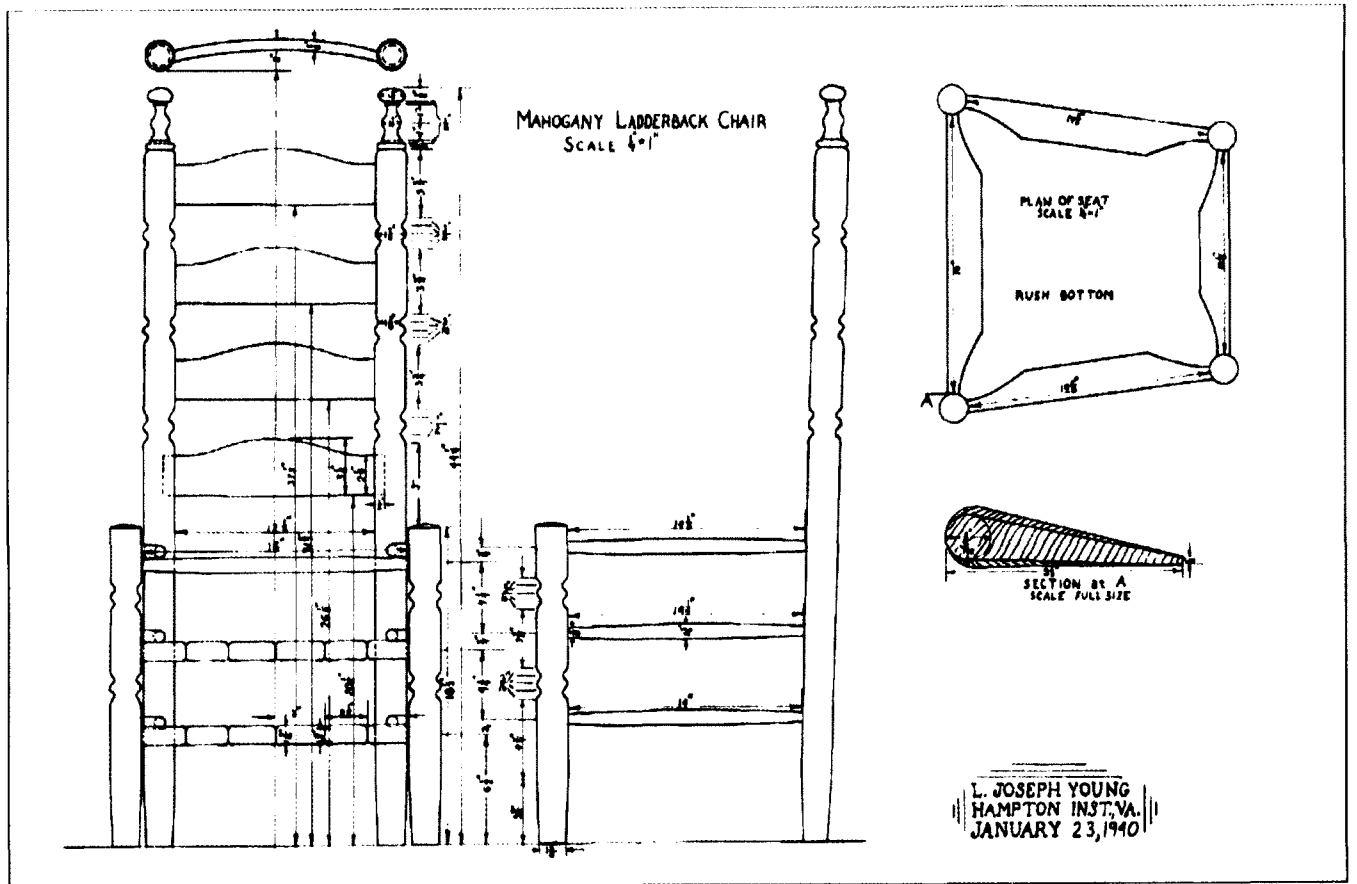


Diagram 6
Leonard Young
Mahogany Ladder-back Chair
January 23, 1940
Pen and ink
 $\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1''$

Appendix D

Interviews

Conversation with Reuben V. Burrell, Wednesday, April 1, 2009, 10:45 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.

Location – Hampton University Museum, 2nd floor office where the Burrell Documentation Project is going on. Mr. Burrell was identifying negatives from his collection. John Spencer, Donzella Maupin had just left his office. He had come down possibly 20 – 30 minutes earlier for an office celebration. Mr. Burrell turned 90 years old on February 26, 2009.

V – Vanessa Thaxton-Ward, Hampton University Museum Oral History Collection.

B- Reuben V. Burrell

V- So, you were telling me about Mr. Adams and Mrs. Bowman?

B – You know Mr. Adams, you know he was from Kentucky, cause he was in school the same time as Moron was in school, I can't think of the man from Baltimore that was high up in the education system, they graduated the same year, I think it was 28 (). He was a master craftsman, as a matter of fact, just about all of the Negroes in the trade school; they were doggone good in their respective area.

V- So, when Mr. Adams graduated, did he start working immediately for Hampton?

B- That I'm not sure, because you see, he was already working by the time I got here.

V - O.k. When he was working, so when you were a student and he was working here were the other instructors white or black?

B- Most of them were black, yeah, let's see, there were two whites in the auto shop, let's see, one in the print shop, one in the machine shop and of course in drafting was white – Mr. Wright. I'll have to get a hold to a group picture.

V – But, Mr. Adams was basically in charge of the cabinet-making?

B- As I said, Mrs. Bowman worked close to him because they would make a chair or something and then it would have to be carried in her shop to upholster it. (Looking at a photograph) That divan's – you know that diamond pattern that was

V – When he (Mr. Adams) , I thought it was interesting that his Master's degree thesis was basically a compilation it looks like of different information together to make one book, did they use that after he finished that, do you know if they used that in class ?

B- I don't know, see Dr. William Robinson, Dr. Robinson might have done part of his dissertation on the trade program. See in later years he went into the foundation of education. He's from this area, there was a school over town, (referring to downtown

Hampton) Union Street school it was the grade school and the high school; he was one of those in that early group of people who attended Union Street School. Somewhere in this set-up I got a picture of those individuals who were the last they had a reunion and so forth and so on.

V- Oh, the anniversary of the trade school

B- No, No, this was the Union Street School. Anniversary of the Trade School, you know I have negatives of the monument – I have a few shots of that.

V- So, now, what about, what's his name, the one from Delaware, was he (Burrell – Joe Young) was he a student when Mr. Adam's was teaching there?

B- Oh yeah, when he finished, he was hired mainly for repairing furniture, so forth, yeah!

V- So, I guess Mr. Young would be good to talk to.

B- Yeah, because he was with him every day (Mr. Burrell was thinking of some names of other guys – James Richardson, we called him Tuskegee, he went up to Grand Rapids, MI that was one of the main furniture building companies in the country and he went up there - _____ Johnson.

V – Now, I was a little confused, Mr. Randolph told me about someone who graduated with him who was a cabinet-making student or whatever, he works in Maryland and he has his own business. Did the program shift; I thought it ended in the fifties with Moron.

B – Yeah, but it is a possibility or we don't know if that fellow stayed and got his BS degree or not.

V- I'll show him to you. He has a website and everything he's a young man.

B – The one thing about the trade school, when the fellows finished their respective trade, some of them, electricians, plumbers, and so forth were required to go over town to take that journeymen's exam. Yeah, quite a bit, quite a bit of work. The only thing about being in the trade program they didn't want us to do things that would be in competition with those individuals direct here in Hampton. But out side of Hampton we used to do various things like some of those – those old boats, one and two cylinders, way back in antiquity, when they went bad, for instance, supposed a cylinder collapsed the would bring that engine over here, leave it in the auto shop, they would take all of the stuff off of it and then it would be carried into the welding shop, placed in a bed of charcoal, they would light the charcoal and the engine when it turned cherry red then they would go in there and weld that rig and then let it slowly cool, they would take it to the machine shop and rebore (??) that cylinder then carry it to the auto shop and they would reassemble that thing. And, back then, the oyster business was very prominent, see its been later years

that they contaminated the water. See oyster and crabbing was wide open here. Back then, you did not have this machinery that will go down on the bottom and take up everything like a doggone vacuum cleaner. You had tongs. We used to make those oyster tongs in the welding shop. Also, when you go to the airport and they are carrying the luggage, pulling the luggage, we used to build those here.

V – So do you think that it was much competition between Hampton and downtown Hampton with the cabinet-making – furniture?

B – No, I can't think of a white establishment that had a cabinet-making shop. Yeah, a lot of the old timers would call it the "normal school." It was quite interesting that most of the people who came in here to get the work done were white. Because most of this stuff was done with solid wood not veneer and all of that kind of stuff - it was quality. They would come in here with a picture of a piece of furniture and what the student had to do was to draw that thing to scale and then build it.

V- What kind of wood would you have?

B – The main wood was mahogany, black walnut, maple and the interior of the drawer that was mostly made out of poplar.

V- Tell me, how come we don't find a Hampton stamp on them or signed or anything? Was that encouraged or not?

B- Well, sometimes fellows would put their name on the bottom of a drawer or something like that. And then I remember tags hanging on a doorknob but nothing that would be permanent.

V – Was there any particular reason do you know or did they just want to say that this was a product made at Hampton?

B – Well most of the people knew. They were familiar with the quality especially the white people.

V- And how did you all advertise those sells? You have taken pictures of the furniture set up in the room with the little tags and people would come in and shop?

B – Well, most of them as I said would come in with a picture of what they want and so forth, and of course we would have open house several times during the year also.

V – So, you think that's what the pictures are that I have been referring to?

B – Oh yeah, well some of them are open house when you see the people in them. But the other stuff I just photographed the individual piece as it was being made or after it was finished.

V – So, it was Mr. Adams, Mr. Young, who else worked in cabinet-making?

B – Oh, Billy B. Smith, you know the fellow with the picture with the ribbon back chair. He worked in cabinet-making, as a matter of fact, when the trade school was eliminated Billy B as we used to call him, was here. (Mr. Burrell informed me on April 15, 2009 that Billy Smith died three months ago – he suffered from Alzheimer's. He was in California). LO, International League of I've forgotten what that O was for. He was hired by the government and his headquarters was in Switzerland. That organization hired tradesmen to go to the third world country to teach the teachers how to teach the various trades. And Joe Young was in the headquarters in Switzerland. He was higher up, he started real early.

V- Can you explain to me because I get it a little bit but not completely – there were diplomas and then there were degrees eventually?

B – Yes, the diploma for the trades was a three year thing then if you wanted to get a degree in a certain area it would take a year to two years to get that degree

V- Extra

B – Yeah, Yeah. See, some fellows, for instance took carpentry or building construction and then they switched on into the engineering after they finished their basic trade.

V – And, then you went on to get your Master's degree.

B- Yes, well you see the basic reason I came to Hampton I was interested in getting a degree in g industrial arts. Now, that is comprised of the various things electricity, woodwork, sheet metal and all. You might experience fellows starting as early as the sixth grade when they went to shop. That's what I was after and when I came to Hampton I knew that the particular trade that would expose me to a whole lot of those areas was auto mechanics. I had to have electricity and all of that stuff, you see. And, since I had had auto mechanics in high school, and I was lucky enough to have a trial professor who had just finished Hampton and he got the idea that I was halfway intelligent and came to me and wanted to know whether I was going to college. I told him no I didn't have any money to go to college so he said, why not apply to Hampton, you can work your way through. Well, I dragged my feet and every time I turned around he was on me and wanted to know whether I had written to Hampton and eventually I wrote to Hampton and sent a high school transcript. And I got an acceptance receipt from Hampton so I came September 13, 1938 to take my work year.

V – You remember the exact date!

B- Oh yeah! And during that period when you took your work year you worked most of the time and you could take up three courses during the year...

V- During the year or during the...

B – During the school year. And at the end of that work year, you most likely would be able to have a part-time job in the dining room waiting on tables. See you could wait on a table three times a day for nine dollars and sixty-seven cents a month or we could clean two classrooms. But, it sounds like very little, but the difference was when we finished Hampton we were just about debt free.

V – So, would you get some of the money yourself and some would go toward your tuition.

B – No, they would keep the money and the Dean of Men did the bookkeeping. For instance, if you needed a pair of shoes or something you could go by his office and get a slip and carry that over town to one of the stores to get your shoes or what have you. See, when we came to Hampton they gave us a list of what we could bring and in so doing that kept the kids from the well to do families and the kids from the poorer families more or less on the same level as far as attire is concerned. See, most of the time we wore uniforms anyways, and the uniforms were made in the trade school in the tailoring department.

V – So nobody felt that one was richer than the other, everyone was working together.

**Conversation with Leonard Joseph Young and his wife Vivian Bridgeforth Young
At their home in Delaware
Vanessa Thaxton-Ward, Hampton University Museum Oral History Collection.**

Joe Young – When I got to High School I had to sign up for if I wanted to go into industrial education or if I wanted to sign up for the college preparatory he would not let me sign up for college prep. “He said you go and take shop you are not as good as your brother.” So my shop teacher when I got ready to graduate from high school he asked me, “Joe what are you going to do when you finish high school.” See, I had worked on the railroad. ...he said you are so good with your hands, because I was the best in the shop

(Wife interrupted)

He said that, they had a work study program and you can pay your way, so I filed the application for Hampton and they accepted me. So, I got in the work year program. So, you had to work your first year and the second year you started your classes. I was in the trade school, three years trade and I turned out to be the best in the cabinet-making shop. So, when I finished Hampton they said that they would like for me would you like to stay on, we would like for you to take a job repairing the school furniture, so that’s what I did.

VDTW – So about how much furniture do you think they made for the school’s use?

Joe Young – Oh, we made a tremendous amount of furniture. We had a show room twice as wide as this room and much longer than these two rooms. We had to make things, chairs, tables and all kinds of cabinets and what not. Then people would come in to buy furniture and people would come down from Williamsburg to buy furniture. And then when the war broke out, in 1945, they made us close the showroom and they emptied the showroom and turned them into offices and that’s how I met this beautiful lady. She came down to work in the war training program. I had the key to her room every morning so I had to let her in, but I wasn’t interested in her – she was just another lady. (Laughter). Sometime, one night, I had been home, I came to Wilmington and I came back to Hampton. I went to get supper and I saw this group of people that she was with. (story of their courtship.

VDTW – (Question directed to Mrs. Young) now, let me ask you a real quick question, did you come as a student or did you come to work?

Vivian Young – I came to work.

VDTW – You worked with the navy?

Vivian Young – Yes. No. What was the name of that program, Joe? It was a federal war training program. They had young men who had finished high school who came there to learn a trade. And, a very interesting thing happened some years after that on second street. I passed there, and I saw the barber shop, I said, _____ and he was one of those students...

Now, I want to tell my FlemmieKittrell story. FlemmieKittrell by then was a very important African American woman on the International scene. She came to have dinner and I was telling you that Al Moron had decided to close the trade school so there was no longer, I always thought that was a big mistake that they should have remained because we could have been like a Virginia Tech or a Poly Tech, Cal Tech or some of these other big schools. Plus, it would have provided a place for black women and men to train in specialized craft. FlemmieKittrell said as I travel around the world I am always meeting Hampton people. They are in agriculture, they are in nursing, because of the health related things, and they are doing home economics, all of the building trades. She said, “I barely rarely meet anyone from the school of education.” She was, because, all those developing countries needed, they needed skilled crafts persons, because the needed to have some type of infrastructure. So, that is what Joe did when he went out into these countries. He was the director of these programs but you had to have a counter person. And, they were always under the ministry of labor. So whatever it he was doing, he trained the person, who was with him, was called his counterpart, and the counterpart had to pass it on to others. We got to meet many people. The nationals

My grandmother was a graduate of Hampton. She graduated as a Indian Student – Hattie Lewis, She is in the book as not having going to the graduation but I know she graduated because she thought General Armstrong was right next to God or running a close second in my grandmother’s opinion. Booker T. Washington was there at the same time she was

Mr. Young brought out a photograph that Mr. Burrell gave him some years earlier. He described the photograph

Mr. Y – I was doing my practice teaching. And, that’s the door to the showroom- That’s the door where that lady had to go everyday and I had the key.

Mr. Y – I go to the Lifelong Learning Center, I’ve been writing stories for over twenty years now; and here’s my resume and some of my writings.

V – I wanted to ask you because I think that it is interesting that you said that your brother was the scholar and you didn't think that you were that good... and the principal said... is that what the principals did back in the day?

Mr. Y -

Interview with Joyce Hudgens Blair, daughter of John Albert Hudgens, Sr.

March, 2012, Magnolia House Bed and Breakfast, Hampton, Virginia

Joyce Blair has a scrapbook that her father made when he was a student at Hampton. The scrapbook is full of his memories of Hampton including projects that he worked on for cabinet-making, the social activities he participated in and also personal information on his marriage, children and extended family. Joyce Blair had shared the scrapbook with me before but we had never had an opportunity to sit down and extensively talk about her memories of her father as it relates to Hampton. He was a cabinet-making major.

J – Joyce Blair

V- Vanessa Thaxton-Ward, Hampton University Museum Oral History Collection.

Interview

V – May I have your father's name please?

J- Yes, my father's name is John Albert Hudgens, Sr. Most of his friends called him "Albert" or "Hudge.,Hudgens", Hudge. He was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, January 4, 1927. He passed away in Portsmouth, Virginia on August 13, 2001.

V- How did he happen to come to Hampton Institute?

J- He came to the Tidewater area in the late 40's. He was drafted into the Korean War in Knoxville. He was drafted into the Navy. Soon after, I don't know when the Korean War actually ended, I'm not sure, it might have been a year or so, he had an option of getting out or staying in -stay in or get out and he took the out. He used his GI Bill to come to Hampton, to come to Hampton Institute.

V- Had he been experienced in cabinet-making before?

J -No, but I recently learned from my aunt, who is his baby sister, they were a year apart, they are number 14 and 15 of 15 children....and she is the only one still living and she lives in Knoxville, that when he was a teenager he had a business at home replacing the screens in peoples windows and doors. So, he had a little shed in the back of the house and he would go around the neighborhood and identify little tears, breaks in screens and would dismantle the frame for the customer, take the screens home and repair them very neat and tight and then reinstall them. He did this after school and weekends He made a little money.

V- Do you remember by chance the name of his high school?

J- He went to Austin High School in Nashville, Tennessee.

Flipping through scrapbook

V- Earlier, you indicated that when he came to Hampton he was a little older than some of the other students?

J – Yes, because he had spent a year or so in the Navy, he was a little bit older than the students who had just finished High school and came right to Hampton. So most of his best friends, he was a year or two older than them.

V- Did he talk much about his days in the Trade School and the cabinet-making shop?

J – Did he ever! Those were good days for him, some of the best days of his life. He loved Hampton Institute until the day he passed away. He was a member of the alumni association and he was very much so a “Pirate” for all of his life. Very proud to be a Hampton alumnus. Very comforted and maintained a sense of excitement about his experiences on campus. He loved the social life. And from what I know he was a pretty good student – I know he was an excellent craftsman and people took time for crafts back then, and creativity was encouraged in the furniture area, of building furniture. He was very creative, I remember as a little girl at Christmas time he would make individual bows and ribbons for each Christmas gifts. They all were works of art, they all looked different.

V- So when you mentioned that creativity was encouraged, was that in the cabinet-making department or anything more specific about when he was actually in the program, did he just strictly do cabinet-making or did he do upholstery?

J- He did both. Yeah he did both. He made that...

(Still flipping through the scrapbook and I noticed a photograph of his first year project)

V – That’s his first year project.

J- He had cut this out, you know you used to be able to send for directions from the paper, and as a matter of fact there’s another one in here, he sent for this one. This is what was in the paper, he sent for directions. (Pointing to another photograph of a desk) This one is in the President’s mansion. He made it for the President’s Mansion. I don’t know what became of it. but umh, he was an excellent upholsterer as well. (Pointing to another photograph) This is before, during and after. He was always very gifted in repairing and it seems like all he had to do lay his hand over something and it would look beautiful again.

V- (Looking at a photograph of a shelf Mr. Hudgens made) That's really amazing, a Chippendale Shelf – (price for sale listed as \$64.00) \$64.00 dollar.

J – Isn't that something?

V- After graduating from Hampton did he go into the cabinet-making business?

J – Well, first graduated in 50" he got married the summer of 50, he met my mother there at Hampton as she was a there for a summer session. She was a student at Virginia State, she may have been a junior. When he graduated he went to teach at the Hanover Training school of boys in Hanover, Virginia. And they were living in Suffolk at the time.

V- He taught

J – Woodworking. Then they moved to Norfolk, first part of 1952 – 1953 and my mom got a job as a social worker. She had been teaching in Suffolk in Southhampton County until then. My father got a job with W. G. Swartz Department Store. They had an actual furniture repair department. So the furniture they sold they hired craftsman to do home service calls to insure the quality of their furniture. That's what my father did for a long time. When W. G. Swartz closed he went to Haynes. And, it was the same situation when he started at Haynes. Furniture was of such quality that they hired craftsmen to go on service calls. Also, he had a side business at home. He had a shop at home where he did independent work. He would do everything from repair picture frames to upholstery chairs to literally crafting things for someone. He did a lot of refinishing work at home, he was always busy.

Always very creative. I remember as a child, he made a box, a frame that was a big star and he planted the flowers inside the star so that the people in the airplane could see it. A big star, all colorful flowers and it was huge. It took up a great portion of the back yard because I just remember bumping into it a lot. But I remember he made it so the people in the airplane would have something pretty to look at.

V- Who would think about that?

J – Up into his late years he would trim hedges into shapes. He had my initials cut out into a shape; He had a big "J". He had a basket; he would make hedges into a basket. Once he came over to my house and he had cut my hedges into suits in a deck of cards. He had one bush that was a spade and one bush that was a diamond. So, I had to put a chain on him then, I had to put a lock on him.

V – You know we had him to come to Hampton and talk to our University 101 students.

J- Yeah, he always talked about coming over to Hampton and talking to the Freshman students. He loved every opportunity to come on campus, he was loving it. He still had a lot of friends he would meet on campus – alumni affairs. He loved the social life.

V – yeah, you can see that. It looks like he went to every party (as indicated in scrap book).

J – Yeah, he didn't miss a party. Whirl wind – that was Mr. Evans nickname. They would talk about how they would go to the 2-five and 10. They would talk about going over to Newport News to some club My father had two other friends on campus.

Interview with Harold Evans, March 22, 2012 at his home, 212 Aspenwood Drive, Hampton, VA. Mr. Evans was a graduate from the cabinet-making department.

H.E. – Harold Evans

V.W. – Vanessa Thaxton-Ward, Hampton University Museum Oral History Collection.

Interview

V.W. – Alright Mr. Evans, you can start by telling me where you were born and when, if you don't mind.

H. E. I was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, August 8, 1929.

VW – Did you go to school where you were raised?

HE - Until I was twelve years old. I went to elementary school. I attended Edward Evans Elementary School.

VW -Any relation?

HE -(No relation) It just happened to be the name of the school.

VW – What kind of courses did you take? Did you take any type of trade courses or vocational?

HE – In Carolina? No, just regular elementary courses. Then I came to Virginia and I went to Huntington High School, Newport News.

V.W. What year did you graduate from Huntington?

H.E. – 1946

V.W. – And then after Huntington?

H.E. – I went to Hampton Institute.

VW – Right after Huntington?

HE – Well, I was accepted but they didn't have room for me so I went second semester – 47” .

VW – And what did you want to major in?

HE - Furniture Trade, cabinet-making, what ever you want to call it.

VW – Is that what you wanted to do?

HE – That’s what I ended up doing. But they took me in as a sheet metal student and Mr. Banks did not know what to do with me because I was doing everything the seniors were doing. So...

VW – So, they took in you into sheet metal? and, you picked up real quick or something.

HE – Well, in high school, I took drafting and sheet metal in high school I had drafting and sheet metal. I did a lot of drafting. And after that, I went into cabinet-making. I thought I was going to go into arts/craft arts, you know. I’m getting old and I can’t remember.

VW – That’s okay, what ever you remember.

HE - And then I took cabinet-making. Completed it. At that particular time you got a college Certificate – certifying you finished your trade and a diploma (indicated you finished all the requirements of the college. Proficiencies in speech and other proficiencies.

VW – Would you happen to have yours?

HE – Certificate ?

VW –Yes, and diploma?

HE - Well, I don’t have them here. (Information on where the materials are located – not inserted).

We had a discussion on getting a copy at some point.

H. E. I intended to go back and get my annual.

V. W. I brought along a picture that you probably have a copy of.

Reviewed the photograph Mr. Burrell took of students in the Furniture department (August)

HE – Laughter. Did you get this from Burrell?

VW – I know Burrell took it but I may have gotten this when we had the anniversary for the trade school. You remember Mr. Cooper, he gave me a lot of stuff. It’s funny though, because Joyce has this picture in her father’s book, or rather, her father had it. I thought you might have one. I have, oh, but I didn’t bring it, one of you all, I am not sure

that I brought it with me - the one of you all when you would have the little teas with Mrs. Bowman.

HE – Yeah, those were in the museum... is that the one. We would have those in the building near the museum. (Maybe Trustee House or Holly Tree Inn)

V.W. - There is a man in it I'm not sure if it is Mr. Adams.

H.E. Was he a kind of stout brown skinned man – that would be Mr. Adams.

VW – I'll get you a copy of the photographs.

HE – I appreciate it. (Started looking at the photograph again) This is _____ Johnson, Theodore Gross, Mr. Evans, Mrs. Bowman, Smith, worked in California, Payne - Dr. Payne, ended up teaching at Virginia State, Brown, Dr. Brown (dead), Crawley -he's dead too.

V.W. Alright, we will go through them again. Mr. Burrell knew or remembered quite a few of them but you definitely have them.

H. E. Mr. Burrell spent quite a bit of time up there. I think he took upholstering under Mrs. Bowman, I think he did. He was in the military. I came in with a lot of fellows that was in the military.

(Mr. Evans identified the men in the photograph)

Top row – left to right:

Lewis Johnson, *Theodore Gross, Harold Evans, Mrs. Bowman, Billy Smith, _____ This fellow here, I think he was in upholstery, I'm not sure about him – most of the fellows were in cabinet-making) _____, * Charles (?) Lowery

2nd row – left to right:

Vincent Payne, (seated) *John Albert Hudgens

Sitting on floor – left to right

Gardner Brown, Calvin Crawley

*Veterans.

Most of the guys were in cabinet-making. One was in upholstery... John Hudgins. His daughter runs a business.

VW – Yes, Joyce. She owns the Magnolia House. Yes, she is the one who gave me your phone number. Joyce told me that. I was supposed to ask you about some things. Whirlwind? Was that your nickname?

H.E.-The other fellow, he got drafted before this picture was taken. Yes, three of us together, we were called The Three Musketeers. We weren't "A" students but we had a good time. (laughter) When I was seventeen I did very well, and then the next year I turned eighteen.

V.W. So you were seventeen when you began Hampton?

H.E. Yes, I was seventeen. Once I turned 18, I started having fun. I was able to get out though. Instead of cum laude I was saying Lawdy, Lawdy Thank you Lawdy.

V.W. So, you said that Mrs. Bowman was really nice? Can you talk more about her and your training?

H. E. Wonderful lady. She cared about us as individuals and she also cared about us learning what she had to offer and that was quite a bit. And of course us as cabinetmakers, upholstering was the counter part. Byline, like you make a chair, you should be able to upholster it. That was not our major, major was furniture. She cared about you and interested in everything we did. And, also motherly like. She gave you guidelines. I don't know if it was just me because I was so young. I wasn't away from home because I grew up in Newport New and she gave good advice and she was really interested in each and every one of us.

V.W. So, you said it is kind of like your minor or byline. What kind of things did she teach you specifically?

H. E. She would teach you – well we would make the chair, and it's just a frame, she would teach us how to put in the springs, the webbing and the packing and then how to cover it. Make it pretty and smooth like that particular chair she is standing in front of there.

V.W. – Now, what is the wetting?? Webbing – like, W e B

H.E. Webbing. It was very strong. We didn't have all of these metal pieces. It was very strong. It looks like almost like a crocker sack. It was very strong. And you put this down there and the springs were on the back. Springs are not like they are today. Once you get it all tied down then you would proceed to cover it.

V.W. Umh that was a lot of work.

H.E. – Well

V.W. Well, that's why, I went to see Mary Welch, I think yesterday. She grew up on the campus. Her father taught in the business department, a white lady. Anyway, it may have been before your time. Well she has furniture made in the trade school. A sofa and two chairs and a dining room table and they are in tip top shape. So, I don't think people make things - the furniture coming out now is nothing like you all made.

H.E. – No, No, because I gave my mother. You had to have a project when you finished and I gave my mother a four poster bed of solid mahogany. I had to borrow Mrs. Bowman's truck so that I could take it to the house.

V.W. – Wow, do you all still have that bed in your family?

H.E. – Oh Yes, my daughter has it.

V.W. – Good! How did that work. Did you all have to pay for the wood? Did you have a material fee or did they just give it to you?

H.E. – In some cases we paid for it. Those of us who could. I had these five feet – six feet poles – and they were squares, solid mahogany, I got the money for that. And, I had money for all of it. At that time it was very reasonable. Solid mahogany today would cost you an arm and a leg.

V.W. Wow,

H.E. What we get today is just like this table top – plastic veneer and plastic wasn't even around then.

V.W. So, ok you had this project. You had this project and would you go somewhere on campus to purchase what you needed to complete your project?

H. E. We would order it.

V. W. You would order it?

H.E. My project it was one. This is the one that you had to be designing yourself.

V.W. Oh, good point. Because that is a question that everyone has. Could you design your own "thing" or did you have to go by – well, I have heard so many stories about people bringing in magazines, but you could also design your own.

H.E. You had to. It was a requirement to do something. To design it. (Looking at photograph) I recall, this fellows name, they call this guy Billy Smith – manufacturing in California)

V.W. Well, so the bed for your mother was your own design? Is it possible to get a photograph of that?

H. E. I doubt it!

V. W. Your daughter can't take a picture of the bed?

H. E. It's probably in storage somewhere.

V.W. Man, you better pull that stuff out. Do you see how much this lady wants to sell this dining room table for.?

H.E. I wouldn't doubt that a bit.

V.W. No less, and this set. There has been no value placed on Hampton's furniture because I believe people don't realize (Pulled out a photograph of the set donated by the Richman's to show Mr. Evans).

H. E. – The bed I designed had pineapples on the top – most of this was the same. Instead of having this mine had had sleeves on it with the pineapple sitting on top. Solid mahogany. And, I did all of the turning myself of the legs. Today we do it differently. Today, they would have cut it in half. In other words, turn this portion and then turn the other portion. In that day and time you did it all. The tools have gotten to be better. One fellow on this picture, I do not see, Rayford Harris, Dr. Harris now. (Still looking at photograph) We did all this kind of work.

V.W. Look at all of the detail on that..

H. E. All of that is hand carved – hand made

VW – so, when you designed your own pieces did you take bits and pieces of everything you had learned and design it. Did you have to draw it out first?

H.E. – Yes, you had to draw something to prove what you were trying to do.

V.W. – You know, Mr. Leonard Young, from Delaware, he gave us some drawings of his – plans, I call them blue prints.

H.E. –Some of us made a little bit of everything. Because one of the tables – let me see if I see anything. A Sheraton. Some of this is coming back. Looks like it's reeded.

V.W. Mr. Burrell made this one for Ms. Thompson.

H.E. – It was like that but the legs were a little smaller. It got broken all up. That was the kind but instead of having the shelf here it was drop leaf but the leaves were a little longer. It was narrower and it was long. I had it by the front door when you come in.

Well, someone, evidently didn't see it – stumbled – those legs were very fragile as you can see – I should have put a shelf in there -but I didn't like the shelf. I read an article in there where some lady had a chest of drawers –Rayford Harris put his name in there. Most of us put our names in there.

V.W. – I'm glad you mentioned that – you are bringing up a lot of my questions. What I have been hearing is that there were no markings – no labels, so how do you know it was made at Hampton? So, some people did put their names.

H.E. Well, some did. Most of them put them in there but they hid them.

V.W. Did they tell you all not to sign? How come they did not use a Hampton stamp? A trade school stamp or something like that. Was there ever any discussion about that?

H.E. – Pause – not that I can recall. Because you know, if one of the fellow if you knew him very well, you could almost look at his work and tell whose it was by a little marking or the way he did certain things. Some people cut one way and others another way.

V.W. Who were your teachers and did they ever say don't. You know, I'm still fascinated by why, if no signature. If Hampton was selling this furniture why they didn't put a stamp or something on it.

H.E. – Well, a lot of people would come and ask for a table. My friends and I decided that we were going to get rich. Tables and chairs with ball and claw. We went to Rigg's furniture company and what we were doing by hand they had a machine that could do thirteen of them in twenty minutes. We said oh no, there goes our fortune.

V.W. (laughter)

H.E. (Still looking at photographs and trying to figure out names) Byrum. I can't recall the first name. That was seventy something years ago. Lowery – I can't remember his first name.

V.W. I know. That's the man who moved to D. C. His daughter works at the Smithsonian. We used his drop leaf table in the exhibit. I have his name in here somewhere.. "Charles" His wife was named Della. He worked in a couple of furniture stores in D. C. He died. I think he made it to the anniversary program in 1996. O.K. thetallone. Yes, that would make sense because his daughter is very tall.

H.E. – Let's see, Johnson, Gross, Hudgins, Lowery, they were all veterans. _____ was almost as old as my daddy because he had put thirty years in the military.

V.W. – Who?

H.E. – Gross

V.W. – He was that old?

H.E. – He was in his forties because he put thirty years in the military if I am correct about that. That particular class _____

V.W. I found a date on this. It was some type of summer class. I found the date in Mr. Hudgins scrapbook.

H. E. – Yes, he kept good records. If it was the year that we did the – overhauled the furniture in The Mansion House. I have so many memories because working in sheet metal. I learned how to put roofing _____. (Pause – Mr. Evans is looking at photographs again)

H.E. – Did you know or go to school or be taught by someone by the name of Mary Ann Yarborough?

V.W. No

H.E. – Because she stayed with, I thinks she is the one who stayed with Mrs. Bowman. I'm not sure of that.

V.W. Did she finish Hampton?

H. E. – I think she did. Someone said she is in a nursing home. She used to live near where I used to live on Granger Drive.

(Looked at photograph of when he was a student at Hampton)

I was young then. You see that necktie I have one. I always wore a necktie. My father said to wear one.

V.W. Well you all seemed to dress up anyway to do the kind of work you did.

H.E. Gross has his apron on. We all wore aprons. I used to take my necktie and stuff it in my shirt, especially when we used the lathe. But I always wore a necktie. Pop's orders.

V.W. So, Mr. Adams, was he one of your teachers?

H.E. He was "the" teacher in cabinet-making. Of course you know he has pieces in the White House.

V.W. No!!??

H.E. He had a desk he made for one of them.

V.W. Oh, Roosevelt

H.E. Yes

V.W. He made that? We have one. There were two made that I know of. One for President Roosevelt and one for Mr. Bottom.

H.E. No, that's not the one. That one was quite a job. He made things so – in the cabinet-making – that was so beautiful you almost wanted to cry. It was swirly. It was a beautiful thing. It had a pie crust on it and we used to look at that thing. Pie crust – you know those little edges. It was all done by hand, not a machine. In fact most of the things that you see that we made as students, it was done by hand. In fact, once we received a piece of the lumber it would be rough. And you had to take your plane and level it out. When they said it was handmade truly it was handmade.

V.W. Wow, so, that was a lot of work.

H. E. Yeah but that was one of those things you had to really love.

V.W. So, explain to me again about the pie crust?

H.E. – It was a tilt top table and it was round like a piecrust. It was being made special for someone. And the material. Let me see if I can find an example. When working with wood you have to work a certain way. So he strolled that thing out he was a genius, to me anyway.

V.W. I have a copy of his Master's Thesis where it looks like he compiled information about wood and everything you all went through.

H.E. – I have one of those too!

V.W. Did you all use that?

H.E. Is there a blue binding on it. I think all of us had one. Well, I think he gave all of us one when we were about to graduate. The last time I saw it, I was putting away an old football helmet. Master's or was it – did he have his PH D?

V. W. I'm not sure

H.E. Yeah, I'm not sure about that. You better check with someone else on that. Doctor of Education. I know he was working on it.

V.W. I'll check with Mr. Burrell because it seems that they were very good friends.

H. E. The weirdest thing. Some girls met Mr. Adams on campus. I think they said it was Crawley's daughter. It was three or four of them there. They said. Mr. Adams, said, Wait a minute, Wait a minute. You say your father was one of my students. And then my

daughter came up and they said, here is another one. He said, your daddy is Harold and she said yes. and he said, it's time for me to quit now.

H.E. – Dr. Vincent Payne, he was one brilliant young man.

V.W. – What did he do?

H.E. – He finished up in education and last I heard of him he was at Virginia State. I understand he retired now. He became a Ph.D. ____ Hurst, I don't see him up here anywhere. Let's see, Raymond Carter... I don't remember if he was in upholstery or.

VW – Did they have a lot of upholstery majors.

H.E. – They did have a lot of them that were upholstery majors and they went into the finer parts of it like tufting. You see that old part like with diamonds in the back – they went into that. All the finer parts of it. We were taught some of everything like caning. But we didn't go into details because our details were with furniture.

V.W. – So, how come you didn't, or did you go into furniture making? Did you go into any kind of cabinet-making

H.E. – The first job I had was a furniture polisher in Jersey City, New Jersey. I quit that because I found a better job at a factory that made instrument boxes for the Navy. They were made out of what we call _____ Mexican Mahogany. It was a beautiful little box. Let's see that was in 1951. In 51 I came back and met my wife who was also at Hampton. You see, we got married before she finished.

V.W. What's her name?

H.E. – Her name was Elizabeth Hyman, she passed now. Elizabeth Hyman . She was a nursing major.

V.W. Hyman, what was her name again?

H. E. Elizabeth Hyman Evans.

V.W. Nursing major

H.E. Yes

V.W. What about your second wife? Is she a Hamptonian?

H.E. No...

V.W. Tell me what did you do as a furniture polisher?

H.E./VW – Polish Furniture

VW – What, was it when it was coming off the assembly line or something?

H.E. – No, when it was in the store.

V.W. – No, you didn't want to do that after all that training that you had.

H.E. – Then I went to this shop making boxes. It was instrument boxes. This man said you are the first colored fellow I hired. It was really confusing at that time. Some of them thought I was Hispanic at times. Well, I worked for this guy and he

V.W. – So, where was this? This was in New Jersey as well?

H. E. – Jersey City, New Jersey. 1950

V.W. Do you remember the name of the company by chance?

H.E. I think it was Mullins Furniture Company.

V.W. And, they made these for the Navy?

H. E. No, the furniture company. I'm trying to think of the name of that little shop was. I can't call the name of it though.

V.W. IF you think of it let me know later. That's interesting though.

H.E. See, I graduated in 1950. I would have been 21 years old my next birthday. 1952 I got married and then I went to the military. I was drafted.

V.W. And, what war was that?

H. E. Korean War.

V.W. O.K., about 1952 you were drafted?

H.E. 1952, March 23 I was drafted. 1952

V.W. Where were you sent?

H.E. I was sent to Korea. Got off at Echini. I can see the beautiful flowers.

V.W. So, Mr. Hudgens was he in the Korean War?

H.E. No, he was in World War II.

V.W. Yeah, I thought Joyce got that mixed up because she kept saying he was in the Korean War but the dates didn't work.

H.E. No, he got drafted at the end of the war. And then they let him go...when they got rid of him he got the GI bill and came to Hampton.

V.W. So, he was drafted at the end of World War II.

H.E. Yes, he put in 90 days 100 days I don't know how many... but I know he was still a young dude. Because we used to call ourselves 17, 18 and 19. Because I was the youngest and Shropshire he was the next, a year older than me and he was one year older than Shrop. Joyce may have a picture of the three of us when we were old men – in our seventies.

V.W. Alright, that makes sense now. So you went to the Korean War and came back to Hampton.

H.E. To where my wife worked. During her practice – she did public health nursing. I got back in 1954, January and our first child was born the last of _____. Of course, _____ Yolanda Evans. She graduated from Hampton too. And, she died in 1994 of cancer. My other daughter she went up State and finished. In 1967 my son was born. He's also a Hampton graduate.

V.W. Ok. So when did you get into the post office?

H.E. In 1956.

V.W. – So, you got out of the furniture business.

H. E. -Well, it was money!

V.W. - (laughter) I hear you, with all of the kids on the way.

H. E. – Because, I worked for a company. Gully Howard... They were on Pembroke Avenue. When things would get tough, you know they would work you three days a week, Monday, Wed. Fridays. Then around Christmas time, we were making kitchen cabinets. I was sitting on my mother in laws porch one day and my brother in law said why you don't take the Post Office exam. That's what he told me, brought me a form. I filled it out. The guy I was working for, if you came and told him you found another job or something he would tell you were fired.

V.W. - He wouldn't let you quit.

H.E. – Yeah, he would tell you you're fired. So, the postmaster called me down and he said, when can you start work. I said I would like to give the man a two-week notice but he might not accept it. I told him he would fire me. So he told me go head and give him a two-week notice. So I did. The first thing he told me, I got a letter inquiring about me. He wanted to know if I was in any trouble. He said the postmaster is inquiring about you,

you haven't done anything wrong. I said no. I went seeing employment. He said, 'OH'. I told him I would like to give you a two week notice.. I told him. He looked at me strange and he said O.K. I just knew he was going to fire me. He even wrote me a reference. He had to let me read it and I couldn't believe it.

V.W. - What was the name of the business again?

H.E. - Gully, Adams and Ames. And then Gully went by himself. Of course, I was always working for Gully. Right there on Pembroke Avenue. And then it became Highpoint Refrigerator and Appliances. I went to the Post Office and I stayed there. I was also in the National Guard Unit. I was the only black at that time.

V.W. - So, what do you think about your experience at Hampton. Did it contribute to like your excellent recommendation from someone who was so rough and tough on every body else, what do you think.

H.E. – My experience at Hampton, well, that's a long story too. My mother told me when I was about six, five or six years old that she was going to send me to Hampton Institute. And, the reason for that was, this man was walking the street with an overcoat and a brief case. My mom asked, "who is that man who just passed by," and they said it was M. he's a teacher at Hampton Institute. My mom looked down at me and said, "I'm going to send you to Hampton Institute." She kept her promise. My father said, your mother always got what she asked for. Of course, when we moved to Virginia, it was right here. Of course, with Newport News ...we had other relatives. Nurse training, some of them were doctors, and some missionaries. But my experience at Hampton was one of growing up. That's because the people there like Mrs. Bowman and Mr. Adams wanted to see you succeed and they cared about you and did everything possible to help you. And, give you such good advice. You know, Mr. Adams would give you advice like a father would. We talked about our businesses and what we expected to do and he would tell you to do certain things for yourself. Just like, if we said we were going to run our business he would say, "remember to always pay yourself." Otherwise, never take money out of the cash register to put in your pocket. Make your salary your money so you won't be digging into your profits....The training we received was excellent. A lot of those fellows became a doctor too. He also taught at Virginia State.

V.W. - Even though you were working in the post office, even though you may not have time with the family and all, did you ever make any furniture on your own, perhaps a little shop or something?

H.E. – I wanted to. But when the children get to coming. My wife and I after we got married, I was supposed to go to Fort Lee because I took the basic ROTC course during that time. Come to find out after I was married for about two weeks they jacked me up because I was in Pipe Lines, they sent me to the Far East – Korea. At that time, the

troops had not been _____ and it was war.

V.W. - So, were they still giving the GI bill when you finished?

H.E. – Oh yes,

V. W.- So you got yours too.

H.E.- I hadn't been in the military at that time. When I got out I took advantage of it. I bought a house, which I think was one of the best things I could have done. Bought a house on Walker Road. I didn't want to buy one, I wanted to buy a car.

V.W. - In Aberdeen?

H.E. -Yes, right there on Walker Road. She was pregnant. I went in there and saw the house and put \$600 down. We talked for a few moments. I told him he taught me. You taught me at Huntington High School.

V.W. - Aberdeen of course was the project that Hampton Institute had something to do with.

H.E. - Yes, they had something to do with it. They helped build the old Aberdeen section. He was It was a great thing because it was built for, mainly, for black folks. You had to go through old Aberdeen to get to it. Where Giants used to be. ... (more conversation on the neighborhood and the house). We moved up to Granger Drive. We got to know the man – Mr. Cod said, let me sell you a house. (Description of how they purchased the new house on Granger Court – another black neighborhood associated with Aberdeen). Bought the house for \$19,500 – two story, four bedroom with a garage.

V.W. – So, Granger Court was started by these two Jewish guys?

H.E. – They were builders. The land was Hampton's old dairy farm. At fact, there used to be an old barn there years ago. And, at one time, all the houses were designed by students from Hampton Institute and _____, so that is what I understand that that was one of the stipulations. Sale this land and people would do the building – building had to be designed by Hampton Institute architecture department. Whiter it is correct or not, that's how I heard it. They built those houses and it filled up so quick. The first houses over there everybody graduated from high school or college. They sold so fast and they said if they had of known that they would go so fast – money was good – working at the post office. Money was goo , benefits were good, as a matter of fact I'm still living off that. We raised our kids there. There was another one – Ridley Square (projects located in Newport News). You hear about that in the paper now. When we left – she finished her school work in Norfolk. Apartments were hard to get. A lady rented me an

apartment. She was also a Hampton graduate. We moved in there and when she finished school we moved into our first house with our new little baby. And we stayed there about six or eight years – 64” we moved to the other place. We didn’t have any furniture. We had a big house.

V.W. Newsome Park was another one of those projects. Did Hampton have anything to do with that. I know the lady I interviewed yesterday said her father had something to do with the business over there.

H.E. - All that I know, during that time, when I came here in 1942, people were coming in droves. Like we used to say, the traffic never stopped on the James River Bridge and traffic was coming from North Carolina. Coming to work in the Shipyard. That’s how we got here. Someone came to get a job from Georgia, he was a friend of my father’s and someone told him to go to Newport News. he came to stay with us in the 1930s, 38 – and 39. Fort Bragg They came from South Carolina and other parts of the state looking for work. And, they came up and some of the young fellows needed to go away and some looking for a place to stay. And, one little fellow ended up marrying one of my cousins. He was just a little boy. We used to play together. My father said, what you doing, and he said, I’m trying to find a place to stay. Everybody else has a place to stay. My father said, you look like you are hungry. And he said, I could eat, Sir. He came on in the house. They chit chatted a little while and father said, I got another room in the back there. So you can stay back there.... And he did. That started a friendship that’s lasted – because his son is a graduate of Howard and was a _____. Instead of going to Wilmington, Daddy got a job here and we all went back home and bought land and stuff. I graduated from High School in 45 and the shipyard had started cutting back. My daddy said, Boy are you going back home. I don’t know Pops I don’t know if I want to go back or not. He said, what you going to do. You can go to school – to any school you want to, as long as it’s Hampton Institute. That’s your mother’s dream. You go there do what you’re supposed to do. When you flunk out, you go to work. I made it my business, not to flunk out.

I guess you know we used to have the apple and the peach orchards.

V.W. Yes, that’s what I hear.

H.E. Fellow, I used to work at the post office with, he used to work for agriculture. He used to help take care of the orchard back then. Well, back then, getting into Hampton was a big deal (or an ordeal).

V.W. – Did you know Mr. Minkins?

H.E. – Mr. Minkins? I did know Mr. Minkins. He used to be in charge of the old mill.

V.W. – So, you had your own mill, too?

H.E. – Yes, I used to work with him

He could tell you all about Booker T. and General Armstrong.

V.W. Was he that old

HE. He was an old man when I knew him.

V.W. Was he white or black?

H.E. He was a black man

V.W. Were there any white teacher's in the trade school, I mean, Cabinet-making when you were in school?

H.E. Let's see. Most of the white people, Wolf was a drafting instructor, he was German. My math teacher, one of them, was a Dr. Bestle, he was also a German. He went to Princeton. They used to call us Little Yale. Once upon a time, I was told that these people had to take a year, Dr. _____ said he never saw such minds, just like a sponge. Everything he could pour out they would

As you know, those old buildings, they did a lot of singing and going to Europe. And... He remembered Booker T. and the horse that General Armstrong used to ride. The circle of grass that's where the horse would drink from.

V.W. You mean the sacred grass we could not walk on.

H.E. We would go through those stories three or four times if we could get him talking. Not only did he teach me and my buddies. A lot of things I learned while I was there that I probably would not have been exposed to

V.W. Did you know Mr. Gilliard?

H.E. Yes, I knew Mr. Gilliard - the art man.

H.E. Yeah, Mr. Burrell came and then he was drafted. And , then he came back. He would come through the shop with Mr. Adams, Mrs. Bowman. They were all friends.

V.W. Mr. Burrell said that she was married to Mr. Fountain who had an upholstery building and Bowman was her second husband,.

H.E. Yes, and she had a little house on Mercury. There was a candy store. She was such a wonderful lady, I could ask her for a quarter and tell her that I would pay her back. I never forget when I graduated – they were trying to put that sign that says, Hampton

Institute in marble. Everyone was supposed to put in five dollars and I had done something with my money. I was going to pay her back. I had a job in California. But everything went crazy when they asked me had I finished my military obligation.

The interview continues with conversation about credentials to get into Hampton and Howard. Discussion concerning his mixed race. His mother was African American and his father was American Indian. His grandfather was a carpenter. He read blueprints and built houses (he was an Indian)

AppendixE
Trade School Curriculum

Trade – School Course of Study in 1913

The figures indicate the number of forty-minute periods per week. All students have military daily drill.

First Year

Applied mathematics.....	2
Current Events	1
Elementary science	4
English	5
Literature	4
Mechanical drawing	6
Mechanics	2
Military drill and gymnastics	3
Shop practice	59
Singing	1
Supervised study	12
Trade discussion	1

Second Year

Applied mathematics	2
Agriculture	4

Current events	1
English and literature	5
Geometry	4
Mechanical drawing	6
Mechanics	2
Military drill and gymnastics	3
Shop practice	59
Singing	1
Supervised study	12
Trade discussion	1

Third Year

American history and civics	4
Bible	4
Bookkeeping	2
Business law	2
Current events	1
English and literature	5
Mechanical drawing	6
Military drill and gymnastics	3
Shop practice	59
Singing	1
Supervised study	12
Trade discussion	1

Fourth Year

Algebra	4
Economics and sociology	4
General history	4
English	4
Literature	4
Military drill and gymnastics	3
Shop practice	24
Psychology	4
Singing	2
Study	21

This course provided secondary training for all trade students...students who completed this course received a regular Hampton diploma.

Source: *The Southern Workman*, 1913: 57-58.

Facts Concerning Hampton Institute Trade School

I. Aims

- a. The training of leaders in the field of Building Construction and Trade and Industrial Arts Education
- b. The training of mechanics in thirteen trades-arranged in this report in the following order:

1. Machine Shop
2. Forging and welding
3. Sheet Metal
4. Plumbing and Heating
5. Automobile Mechanics
6. Brickmasonry and Plastering
7. Carpentry
8. Electrical
9. Painting
10. Printing
11. Cabinetmaking

Upholstering

12. Tailoring and Dry Cleaning

- c. Training of intelligent citizens

II. Admissions

- a. Minimum age – 16 years
- b. Minimum preparation – graduation from upper one-half of accredited high school
- c. Aptitude for trade work determined by testes and demonstrations after enrollment.

III. Trade School day

Basic Trade Courses	Academic Work	Trade Work
1 st year	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.	(9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. (1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
2 nd year	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.	(9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

		(1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Summer		44 hrs. per week
3d year	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.	(9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
		(1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Advanced Courses		
4 th year	7:30 – 12 n	1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
5 th year	7:30 – 12 m	1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Summer		44 hrs. per week

B. Academic subjects taken in three-year basic trade course:

1. English Composition
2. Industrial Mathematics
3. Reading and Public Speaking
4. Personal Hygiene
5. Applied Mathematics
6. Elements of Chemistry and Physics
7. Industrial Sociology
8. Bookkeeping and Business Law

Satisfactory completion of three-year basic trade course with above academic work leads to Hampton Institute Trade Diploma.

C. Advanced Courses in Building Construction, Industrial Arts, and Trade Education leading to a B.S. degree are given in two additional years and one summer after completing an appropriate basic trade course.

NOTE: Three-year basic trade courses are offered for first time September 1936, with graduate June, 1940. Previous four-year course covered essentially some number of trade hours, but included more academic subjects.

IV. Apprenticeship training and Productive work

- a. Technical trade training supplemented by productive work in all departments.

- b. Annual commercial value of productive work averages \$200,000.00.
 - c. Trade departments
 - 1. Construct and maintain institute buildings
 - 2. Maintain al mechanical services
 - 3. Service all departments
 - 4. Serve large group off-campus customers
 - d. Students' pay on productive work ranges from 15 cents to 35 cents per hour based on experience and grades.
- V. Staff
 - a. Bi-racial
 - b. Selected on basis of
 - 1. Character
 - 2. Trade experience and ability
 - 3. Educational qualifications
 - c. Additional training in service
- VI. Expenses to students for board, room, tuition, etc.
 - a. Average cost - \$400.00 – 1st year
\$300.00 – thereafter
 - b. Costs offset particularly by pay for productive work and for other part-time campus jobs.
- VII. Placement
 - a. Regular placement officer in charge of records and placements

Source: Report on the Trade School, c. 1940s. Hampton University Archives, Trade School Box.

Appendix F

Selected Furniture Glossary

Apron – A cross member or horizontal piece of wood below a tabletop, chair seat or underframing of a case piece. Also called a skirt.

Baluster – A turned vertical member or upright support (as a narrow upright column in the back of a chair or column on a cupboard) having a vaselike or urn-shaped outline. Also called a banister.

Banding -A ribbon of contrasting inlay; a narrow edging or boarder of veneer.

Beaded Molding -Fine, convex, half-round molding , sometimes with a fillet on either side-like an astragal molding. Also a half-round molding carved to simulate beads along its length.

Beading- Small, beadlike, semicircular projecting molding.

Cabriole Leg - A curved leg with an outcurved knee and incurved ankle ending in an ornamented foot of various forms. The leg generally follows the shape of an inverted S.

Corner Block - A reinforcing block glued and/or nailed or screwed into the corner of a chair or sofa frame to hold the leg and seat rail together.

Cornice -The horizontal crowning molding of case furniture equivalent to the top of an entablature in architecture. It varies with the order or style, but nearly always projects.

Dovetail - A right-angled joint formed by interlocking flaring tenons which resemble a dove's tail.

Dowel - A circular wooden pin or peg, driven into a hole to fasten two pieces of wood.

Finial -A turned or carved decorative ornament, often used to crown the corners or center of the pediment on a large piece of case furniture. A pendant finial is a hanging or downward projecting finial, usually at the center of the apron or bottom of a piece of case furniture.

Gate-leg Table - A drop-leaf table in which the legs, supported by stretchers, form swinging gates to support the leaves.

Highboy – A tall case piece comprised of two sections of drawers; the lower section supported on legs. The term was used in the 18th century – high chest, chest-on-frame or high chest of drawers are period terms used for this form.

Knee – The outcurved upper portion of a leg: especially of a cabriole leg.

Molding - Any narrow, continuous decorative surface, projecting or incised with shaped profile usually convex or concave or a combination of both.

Mounts. -Escutcheons, handle –pulls and other decorative as well as functional details applied to furniture pieces.

Pembroke Table - A drop-leaf table, usually with straight legs and with a long square or oval top. Its leaves fold down on opposite sides and small tray-like drawers are at each end.

Piecrust Table - A model term for a tripod, often tilt-top circular tables whose top has a scalloped, molded rim resembling the edge of a piecrust. In the 18th century such tables were identified simply as tea tables or turn-up tables.

Pilaster - Detailed like a column and serving the decorative function of the same, the pilaster is merely a flattened version of a column projecting slightly from a building or piece of furniture.

Turnings - Balusters and spindles and other furniture parts that are shaped on a lathe.

Veneer – A thin layer of wood glued onto a base wood for decorative effect.

Source: *American Furniture 1620 to the Present*, Elizabeth Bidwell Bates

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Hampton, VA 23668

Hampton History Museum
City of Hampton Library, Special Collections

Repositories: Inventories, Artifacts

Casemate Museum
Fort Monroe, Virginia

DeWitt Wallace Gallery
Colonial Williamsburg
Williamsburg, Virginia